



Manpower Update Report

Beauty Care and Hairdressing Industries

2022



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Beauty Care and Hairdressing Training Board (BHTB) would like to express its gratitude to the members of the focus group for their valuable time and insights on the manpower situation of the wellness, health and related sectors. Special thanks go to CPJobs and CTgoodjobs which shared the database of job vacancies. The views of focus group and Members of BHTB, and information from major recruitment websites formed an integral part of this update report.



Contents

Introduction	1 - 2
Background Objectives	
Methodology	3 - 4
Overview Focus Group Meeting Desk Research Data Analysis Limitations	
Findings	5 - 11
Latest Developments and Trends of the Wellness, Health and Related Sectors Future Manpower Demand Training Needs Challenges in Recruitment and Staff Retention	
Recommendations	12 - 14
Government Training Institutions Employers Employees	

Introduction

Background

The Beauty Care and Hairdressing Training Board (BHTB) under the Vocational Training Council (VTC) is appointed by the Government of Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. According to its terms of reference, the BHTB is responsible for, determining the manpower demand of the industries, assessing whether the manpower supply matches manpower demand, and recommending to the VTC the development of vocational and professional education and training (VPET) facilities to meet the assessed training needs.

Under the new approach, one full manpower survey is conducted every four years, and is supplemented by two manpower updates. The BHTB completed its latest manpower survey in 2020 while two manpower updates would be conducted in 2022 and 2023.

The 2022 manpower update report consists of:

- i. a focus group meeting was conducted to collect the views of industry experts on the latest development in the industries, manpower and training

needs, recruitment difficulties, and measures to tackle the challenges of industries face; and

- ii. desk research to capture recruitment information as well as analyse job advertisements.

Objectives

The objectives of the manpower update report are as follows:

- (i) to examine the latest trends and developments in the industries;
- (ii) to explore the job market and training needs;
- (iii) to identify challenges in recruiting and retaining talent; and
- (iv) to recommend measures to meet the manpower and training needs.

Methodology

Overview

With reference to the 2020 full manpower survey of the beauty and hairdressing industries, this update report aims to provide qualitative descriptions of the recent development of the industries through focus group meeting and interviews, supplemented by making reference to some quantitative data of recruitment advertisements from desk research.

Focus Group Meeting

The theme of this focus group meeting is the latest manpower development of “wellness, health and related sectors”. Through consulting experts of relevant sectors, it was intended to collect the views of the latest trends and developments of the manpower, training needs and recruitment challenges of the sectors, etc. The focus group members are representatives from the following sectors:

- (i) Beauty health care services (including application of equipment)
- (ii) weight management and fitness
- (iii) health food, dietary therapy and nutrition

The focus group meeting was conducted on 12 July 2022 and moderated by Secretariat staff of the BHTB, who guided members towards an in-depth discussion on the topics set out by the Working Party on Manpower Survey of BHTB. The discussion at the meeting was transcribed to facilitate the analysis.

An online interview was also conducted on 15 July 2022 with an industry expert who was not available to attend the

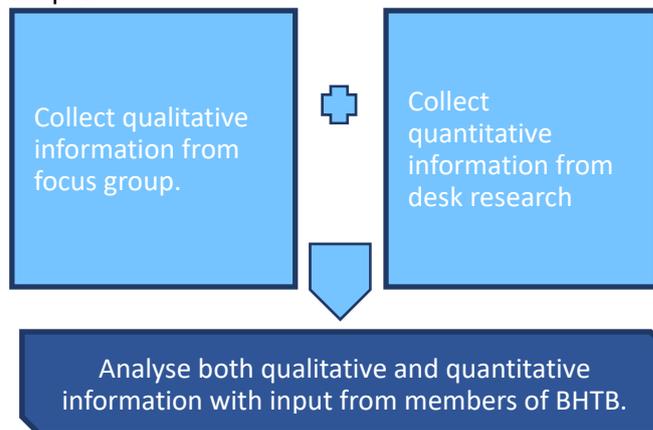
mentioned focus group meeting. Two other phone interviews with experts from the fitness sector were conducted on 19 and 20 July 2022 to further collect the information of its manpower development.

Desk Research

Manpower information covering the period between second quarter of 2021 and the second quarter of 2022 was collected through desk research. A total of 7,766 recruitment records of these sectors were collected during the research period. Mapping was made with the list of related companies under the Hong Kong Standard Industrial Classification for removal of any duplicated records.

Data Analysis

The analysis consists of the following three steps:



Limitations

As this is not a comprehensive manpower survey, the findings and recommendations of the focus group meeting are more

qualitative in nature and the report focuses mainly on the manpower trends.

In addition, the figures of job advertisements were collected from major recruitment websites and the Labour Department, while other channels, such as head hunting for managerial positions or referral via the social media recruitment platform were not covered. Since the data collected is a snapshot of a particular period without reference to any historical data, this can serve as reference information supplementary to the findings of focus group meeting.

Findings

Latest Developments and Trends of the Wellness, Health and Related Sectors

Hidden worries of “Capital of Longevity”

According to “The Mortality Trend in Hong Kong, 1986 to 2020”¹, feature article published by the Census and Statistics Department of the Government in November 2021, the average life expectancy of both sexes in Hong Kong continued to be the longest in the world. The expectations of life at birth for males was 82.9 years and that for females was 88 years. As Hong Kong people are living longer than ever, the city is crowned the “Capital of Longevity”. However, this has brought major changes to the demographic structure, workforce and economy.

Owing to the pandemic over the past two years, the Government had required relevant scheduled premises including beauty care salons, massage establishments and fitness centres, etc. as stipulated in Cap. 599F, to suspend their operations four times. Relevant sectors were hit hard because of these measures. Many beauty care salons and fitness centres closed down and some of their practitioners had to change their careers. Despite that, with the ageing population in Hong Kong and an increase of on awareness on health concern raised by the public, the sectors are optimistic about a rising demand for wellness and health

services and products.

Increasing demand for pain management services

Urban living has never been as busy as in recent years. People are working long hours and enduring high pressure. With inadequate exercises and rest, most citizens are suffering from various “urban pain symptoms” such as headaches, shoulder and neck pains, low back pains, etc., which are regarded as the most common health issues. Therefore, the demand for pain management services has increased significantly over the past few years.

In response to the aforementioned development of the pain management market, an increasing number of beauty care groups would transform their businesses by offering one-stop beauty health care services. These services cover health massage treatments (including application of different techniques or equipment-aided treatments), hair scalp care, slimming, prenatal and postpartum care services, etc.

For the fitness sector, some personal trainers would partner with chiropractors and / or physiotherapists to open the stretching / pain management centres. These centres would make use of non-

¹ Original article: Hong Kong’s average life expectancy continues to rank first globally | Males live up to 82.9, females, 88 | Six tips to improve immunity | HKBT (businesstimes.com.hk)
<https://www.businesstimes.com.hk/articles/128758/>

pharmacological therapies to offer health services for managing pain and improving muscle problems such as muscle training, sports therapy, stretching and rehabilitation training, etc., so as to improve the muscle conditions.

Growing importance of physical fitness, exercise and health

During the pandemic, the Government requested all sports and fitness premises to cease operation a number of times. This has changed the citizens' exercising habits and ways. The Asian Academy for Sports & Fitness Professionals² conducted a survey in June 2022 to examine the fitness habits before and after the fifth wave of COVID-19. The survey findings revealed that half of the respondents have gained weight due to work from home and reduction of going out during the pandemic.

As the general public has increased their awareness on the importance of sports, some practitioners have taken advantage of rent reduction of shops / commercial building amidst pandemic, and began to start their business and open sports / fitness centres. Amongst these, "24-hour fitness centres" are expanding in a downward market. At the 4th Hong Kong Fitness Guide 2021 Summit "Industrialisation of Sports & Fitness"³, it was pointed out that the number of "24-hour fitness centres" have increased from 37 in 2019 to 117 in 2021. This type of fitness centres would usually offer highly flexible opening hours, which could cater the needs of particular customer groups with unstable working hours or tend to do the exercise/fitness in the non-peak hours. Their major customers group would usually be youngsters.

² Source: The 5th wave of COVID disrupted Hong Konger's exercise regimen. Survey reveals more than half of the respondents gained weight | live news | Hong Kong and Macau | on.cc

³ Source: The 4th Hong Kong Fitness Guide 2021 Summit "Industrialisation of Sports & Fitness"

Health food is now a necessity

In the past, the public generally considered health food as non-essential high-cost products. Under the pandemic, citizens pay more attention to the health issues for themselves and friends as well as boost immunity. On the other hand, as the population ages, there are constant changes in the health risks faced by the public. These enable them to understand the principle of preventive measures. Therefore, health food is gradually becoming a "necessity".

Currently, most health products are produced in and imported from overseas. Meanwhile, the Government is determined to promote the "Made in Hong Kong" brand. Local companies are encouraged to produce reputable health food locally with high safety standards, to cater for physical needs and tastes of the public. Apart from fostering the long-term development of health supplement sector in Hong Kong as well as resolving the overload problem of the supply chain triggered by the pandemic, local talents (including experts in research and development and quality assurance of health food field) can also be nurtured. The sector believes that the sales in the health food market will continue to grow.

Speeding up e-commerce and social media application

The pandemic has caused the reduction of physical shopping, and online shopping becomes more popular. Health food / service suppliers actively invest on the development of e-commerce and use online and social media platforms (such as Facebook, Instagram, Tmall, Taobao, etc.) for publicity and promotion.

Besides, customers have increased their expectations on diversified products / services. Take the high purchasing power of young customers group as an example, they would usually consider the products' efficacy, its brand's reputation and other factors before purchase. To cope with the above changes, the sectors would make use of the online platforms to effectively improve the interaction and communication with customers. For example, health food retailers would produce some promotional clips about healthy eating and exercising on a regular basis to attract different customer groups to purchase health food.

Supporting enterprises' transformation with big data application

To enhance the competitiveness, more beauty health care groups strengthen the application of information and technology. For example, online reservation and customer relationship management systems are introduced to handle day-to-day operation and to improve its efficiency.

With the aid of big data analysis, the sectors can identify the customers' preference based on their backgrounds (including age group, spending power, purchasing history of various health services / products, etc.). This information is helpful for them to offer personalised beauty health care services quickly and accurately to meet the customers' needs. This can also enhance their experiences and drive them to repeat their purchases.

Relevant regulations affecting business environments

As some beauty and health services might involve traditional Chinese medicine (e.g. moxibustion, naprapathy, cupping therapy, etc.) or western medicine, practitioners of beauty care industry should be cautious to avoid violating the regulations (e.g. Chinese Medicine Ordinance, Pharmacy and Poisons Ordinance, etc.) when launching any beauty health care services.

Currently, there is no specific laws to regulate nutrition and health foods in Hong Kong. Under the Food and Drugs (Composition and Labelling) Amendment: Requirements for Nutrition Labelling and Nutrition Claim) Regulation 2008, it requires all prepackaged foods to have nutrition label⁴ (i.e. commonly known as 1+7) to regulate misleading or deceptive nutrition labels and nutrition claims. Health foods are also regulated by this labelling requirement.

Besides, the "Undesirable Medical Advertisements Ordinance" also sets out provisions to prohibit false claims. This serves as a way to handle the problem about orally consumed products with misleading information and undesirable claims. Therefore, it is advised that the sectors should also avoid making any false claims when selling the nutrition and health foods or beauty health care services.

⁴ The requirement to include information about calories and the seven core nutrients covers calories, protein, total fat, saturated fat, trans fat, carbohydrates, sugar and sodium. (Source: FAQs on nutritional labels (cfs.gov.hk).)

Future Manpower Demand

The BHTB conducted the desk research during the period of the second quarter of 2021 to the second quarter of 2022 to collect the job advertisements in the wellness, health and related sectors. 7,766 recruitment advertisements were recorded. Table 1 shows the most popular recruitment advertisement categories:

Table 1: Top four categories of recruitment advertisement	
1.	Beauty health care services (such as beauty and skin care, facial and body massage, foot massage)
2.	Health and wellbeing services
3.	Sports and fitness
4.	Health food (including Chinese and Western supplements, nutrition supplements)

Apart from professional trade knowledge and skills, desk research result also shows that the market is eager to recruit practitioners with certain emerging skills. Table 2 lists out the top three professional and emerging skills:

Table 2: Top three skills	
Industry-specific skills	Emerging skills
1. Beauty and body (care and massage), beauty health care	1. Digital marketing and social media
2. Fitness, slimming and toning	2. E-commerce
3. Nutrition and health food knowledge	3. Big data analysis

With reference to the trends and manpower development of the sectors, views of focus group on the training needs of relevant sectors were collected.

Training Needs

Core skills are indispensable

Beauty health care knowledge and skills

It is anticipated that there will have a more prosperous development of beauty health care and wellness sectors in the future. Frontline practitioners (such as beauticians, body therapists, wellness consultants, etc.) should enrich the core knowledge and skills on beauty health care including:

- (i) Health massage
- (ii) Aromatherapy, all-natural beauty care
- (iii) Application and efficacy of health food and herbal dietary therapies
- (iv) Nutrition and health preserving beauty care solutions
- (v) Occupational safety and health
- (vi) Professional conduct

Besides, frontline practitioners should be well equipped with products' knowledge and the operation of auxiliary devices so as to provide safe and reliable beauty health care services.

Stretching and rehabilitation training

To cope with the latest development of the wellness market, it is recommended that frontline practitioners (such as sports therapists, personal trainers, etc.) should keep abreast of the core knowledge and skills on stretching and rehabilitation training, including:

- (i) Handling of sports injuries
- (ii) Static and dynamic stretching
- (iii) Muscular strength and muscular endurance testing
- (iv) Cardiopulmonary function testing
- (v) Theories on power and balance

- (vi) Application of fitness equipment

These could help customers who suffer from pain symptoms to improve body function, prevent and relieve pain.

Build up and operate personal branding

Personal branding is a marketing means to demonstrate his/her unique and distinguished values or reputation. Integration of personal branding with various products and services is a good way to draw market attention.

With an increasing popularity of social media influencers, brand building and brand operation are no longer restricted to product promotion at corporate level. Therefore, enterprises should encourage their frontline employees to actively create an outstanding personal branding by building up their personal image and shaping the charisma and influence. This not only brings more customers to the enterprises, but also extra income and fame to employees.

Video production and digital skills are a must

Video production knowledge and skills

The pandemic has changed people's consumption patterns and the requirements of products/services. Producing videos on healthy eating and fitness has already become a new trend. As such, it is recommended that the practitioners should strengthen the knowledge and skills on video production. This could help promote the products and services, thus attract more different types of customer groups.

Digital marketing knowledge and skills

With a rising trend of online purchases of health products or services, the sectors adopt e-commerce platforms for their promotion (including setting up online stores) so as to increase the sales volume. Frontline practitioners are encouraged to strengthen the knowledge and skills on digital marketing and social media marketing in order to address the needs of different customers.

Professional ethics and conduct

Employees should be well equipped with good professional ethics and conduct, which can enhance their integrity and at the same time gain respect from colleagues and partners. This helps enhance the reputation and image of the sectors, the companies to sustain their business development.

Soft skills should not be overlooked

Communication / interpersonal skills

Frontline employees must possess good communication skills and eloquence for providing good quality services and professional advices to customers. In the long run, good communication skills can help establish good relationships with customers. It can also enhance the collaborations and teamwork with colleagues and management in the workplace, also result in building a strong relationship and team spirit.

Challenges in recruitment and staff retention

The sectors have encountered different challenges in the recruitment and staff retention. The main reasons are summarised below:

Work preference of young generation

Young employees place great importance to “work-life balance”. They also appeal to short-term benefits and immediate satisfaction. They prefer to work as “slashers”, i.e. people with multiple concurrent careers and identities rather than only a single career. They are unlikely to stay in the same company to acquire the knowledge and skills of the sectors. Therefore, these younger generations are less loyal to long-term employment.

Besides, these young people are more likely to pursue new experiences or run their own business, such as being a key opinion leader, running an online business, etc.

The aforementioned factors have made it difficult for companies to nurture young employees to become talents with practical and technological skills.

Insufficient digital technology, marketing talents

For more than two years, the pandemic has forced all industries (including wellness, health and related sectors) to quicken their digital transformation in order to enhance their competitiveness. Regardless of different scales of companies, there is a high demand for talents in digital marketing/innovation and technology/big data analysis.

However, there are insufficient talents in digital, innovation and technology in local labour market to meet the demands.

Turnover remains high amidst emigration wave

With western countries' latest immigration measures, more and more local seniors / experienced staff and professional personnel had been relocated to overseas. According to the latest “Quarterly Report on General Household Survey”⁵ published by the Census and Statistics Department of the HKSAR Government, there were 3.8 million employed persons during the first quarter of 2022, 89,600 decrease year-on-year. The beauty, wellness, health and related sectors have also faced similar situation of talents loss.

⁵ Source: <https://hk.epochtimes.com/news/2022-06-02/25671553>

RECOMMENDATIONS

To meet the future development of the sectors, it is considered essential for the Government, training institutions and employers to provide suitable manpower training to the practitioners and young people in the following areas:

Government

Strengthen promotion on Vocational and Professional Education and Training

The Government should join hand with the sectors to promote the professionalism of vocational and professional education and training (VPET) so that it could develop career progression pathway for wellness, health and related sectors. This can play a pivotal role in nurturing the talents they need.

Provide support to enterprise training

To assist the sectors in nurturing local talents, the Government could consider offering different supports (e.g. funding / subsidies / simplified application processes) to employers. Employers are also encouraged to offer different internship opportunities for young people.

Establish an accreditation system

The Government should assist the fitness sector in establishing an “accreditation system” to improve the professionalism and the status of practitioners.

Training Institutions

Cooperate with industry to nurture future new talents

Diversified internship opportunities, systematic workplace learning and assessment should be organised for students. These can help them to gain practical working experiences, enhance their professional knowledge and skills as well as build up future employability to cope with the manpower demand of the sectors.

In response to the rapid development of the sectors, training institutions should strengthen industry cooperation to design suitable training programme with reference to the market requirements of the sectors as well as update its course contents in a timely manner (e.g. incorporating the updated knowledge and skills).

Representatives of the sectors should be invited to introduce the latest developments of the sectors so that instructors/ secondary school teachers/parents can have better understanding of the development and encourage students to join the wellness, health and related sectors. Besides, training institutions could also consider organising preparatory courses for young people who intend to join the sectors.

Short-term core skills training

With the rapid development of the sectors and the hectic schedule of practitioners,

training institutions could organise short-term courses or workshops to help practitioners enrich the professional knowledge and skills, which could be applied effectively to work. Short courses may include the following:

- (i) Beauty health care;
- (ii) Stretching and rehabilitation training;
- (iii) Digital media marketing strategies, and
- (iv) Video production.

Employers

Provide latest industry's information

Employers should provide the younger generation with a clear picture about the development path, promotion ladders and personal career development in the sectors/enterprises. This information can help young employees to have better understanding of the future development opportunities in the sectors.

Understand the real job expectations from young people

Employers should understand young people's thoughts and needs, help them to adapt or engage into their job positions and unleash their strengths.

Enhance employees' career development

More and varied job rotations opportunities should be provided to young employees so as to enhance their professional work capability. Employers should also provide more opportunities for training and promotion.

Management should strengthen communication with employees and listen to

their views and needs so that they could have better understanding of corporate culture and increase their sense of belongingness.

Attract personnel from other fields

To engage more new talents, employers could consider recruiting people who change their careers (such as graduates who completed the Employees Retraining courses). On the other hand, companies should also actively partner with training institutions to identify suitable talents. These could help resolve the problem of manpower shortage.

Encourage lifelong learning

Employers should encourage and subsidise their staff for continuous and lifelong learning.

Make good use of government funding schemes

Employers are encouraged to make use of different information and technology funding schemes of Government for helping them in business transformation and service enhancement.

Employees

Effective Use of resources for self-upgrading

To stay competitiveness, employees are encouraged to make use of subsidies provided by different Government funding schemes, such as the "Skills Upgrading Scheme Plus", the "Continuous Education Fund", the "Recognition of Prior Learning", etc. for skills upgrading and enhancing their professional knowledge and soft skills. The areas of knowledge and skills include beauty health care, stretching and rehabilitation

training, digital media marketing strategies,
video production, etc.