

More unhappy with work-life balance here, says survey

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WORK is getting in the way of family time for more people in Singapore, according to data from a national survey.

Over half or 55 per cent of respondents in 2013 said their work demands ate into their family time more than they liked, up from 47 per cent in 2009.

This was odd, said Institute of Policy Studies researcher Mathew Mathews, as more businesses

now offer work-life harmony schemes such as flexi-time work arrangements.

“What is probably happening is that people’s aspirations for work-life harmony is increasing. I think the realisation is hitting more men... Perhaps this is because women too are expecting more from their partners. With that, more men are reporting this interference between work and family life,” said Dr Mathews.

Of the men surveyed, 58 per cent expressed dissatisfaction in

2013, compared with 44 per cent in 2009.

Figures from the 2013 Survey on Social Attitudes of Singaporeans were shared for the first time last week by Dr Mathews, who compiled the data with National University of Singapore sociologist Paulin Straughan.

Dr Mathews spoke on Friday at a conference in which 450 people discussed how to better support families.

The survey was conducted annually from 2001 to 2003, then every three to four years.

A nationally representative sample of 2,000 people aged 15 and above were polled in the latest survey, which was commissioned by the Ministry of Social and Family Development.

Worrying about work-life balance is a luxury the low-income do not have, said Cindy Ng-Tay, assistant director of Covenant Family Service Centre.

She urged policymakers to examine how they can extend the same “privileges” to vulnerable groups who find it hard to cut down on work hours.

The survey also found that the proportion of Singaporeans who were satisfied with their family life increased for those who were married or single, both by 6 percentage points, to 95 per cent and 90 per cent respectively, between 2009 and 2013.

But for people who were divorced, separated or widowed, the proportion fell from 83 to 78 per cent during that period. The figures for 2013 were similar to those in 2006, whereas the 2009 one was similar to that in 2003.

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