

Financial pressures, co-parenting with friends: NTU survey reveals young Singaporeans' views on parenthood



According to NTU's survey, work-life balance and mental readiness were also significant concerns among respondents.
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By **CANDICE CAI**



When it comes to having children in Singapore, the biggest hurdle that many young Singaporeans seem to face is the financial pressure that comes along with it.

This was the finding of a joint study by Nanyang Technological University and market research recruitment agency Research Network on the attitudes of Singaporean youths towards parenthood.

According to the survey results released on Wednesday (Dec 11), 70 per cent of the 230 respondents aged 18 to 35 cited the high cost of living and the financial demands of raising a family in Singapore as the top barrier to having children.

Work-life balance and mental readiness were also significant concerns affecting 60 per cent and 40 per cent of participants respectively.

They voiced apprehension about juggling both career ambitions and family responsibilities, with one individual saying: "I do not think I will make a good parent and it will not be fair on the child if I were to bring him or her into the world."

Survey used AI interviewing platform

By surveying participants through the AI platform, it is believed that respondents can share their candid opinions without social pressure or fear of judgment from a human interviewer, resulting in more authentic insights, according to the press release.

The results of the study are compiled in a report, titled 'Young Singaporeans' attitudes toward parenthood: Key findings and policy implications', which hopes to shed more light on young Singaporeans' hopes, fears and the perspectives that shape their family planning decisions.

Openness to alternative parenting arrangements

The study has also revealed some insightful emergent themes voiced by several individuals.

These include concerns over the environment and climate change, as well as generational trauma, which refers to the transmission of psychological effects from the generation that experienced trauma to subsequent generations, according to the American Psychological Association.

One respondent noted: "I feel like in Singapore, there's not much support around therapy and being ready to have a kid, especially in an Asian culture where there is a lot of generational trauma."

More interestingly, the findings also revealed some participants' willingness to explore "non-traditional structures" when it comes to raising kids, such as co-parenting with friends.

One individual shared: "I wish I could raise a kid with my female friends though - I trust them."

According to the report, this suggests an openness to alternative parenting arrangements, reflecting broader societal shifts and the need for policies that support diverse family configurations.

Other less commonly expressed themes include the potential conflict between the aspiration of being a digital nomad and having children, as well as the perceived unequal treatment of fathers in Singapore's social and legal systems, the report added.

These findings by NTU and Research Network also seem to corroborate a street survey conducted by AsiaOne and published in November, about Singaporeans' perceptions on parenthood.

A majority of respondents whom AsiaOne spoke to had expressed their reservations about having kids due to financial concerns and uncertainty over the future.

"The cost of living is shooting up and I don't think it's going to decline anytime soon, so I think that's the number one factor," said one interviewee.