



Employment profile and needs of high functioning autism (HFA) youth from the perspectives of youth, parents and employers

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Background

As the population of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) grows up, the demand for supports to help them live independently also increases. Employment is an integral part of independent functioning and our ASD youth have typically struggled in this aspect as reflected by the lowest employment rates across other special educational needs groups. In order to obtain a comprehensive picture and often times a lot of stakeholders are involved in the employment process of HFA youth, we intend to obtain information from various parties to converge on a general picture.

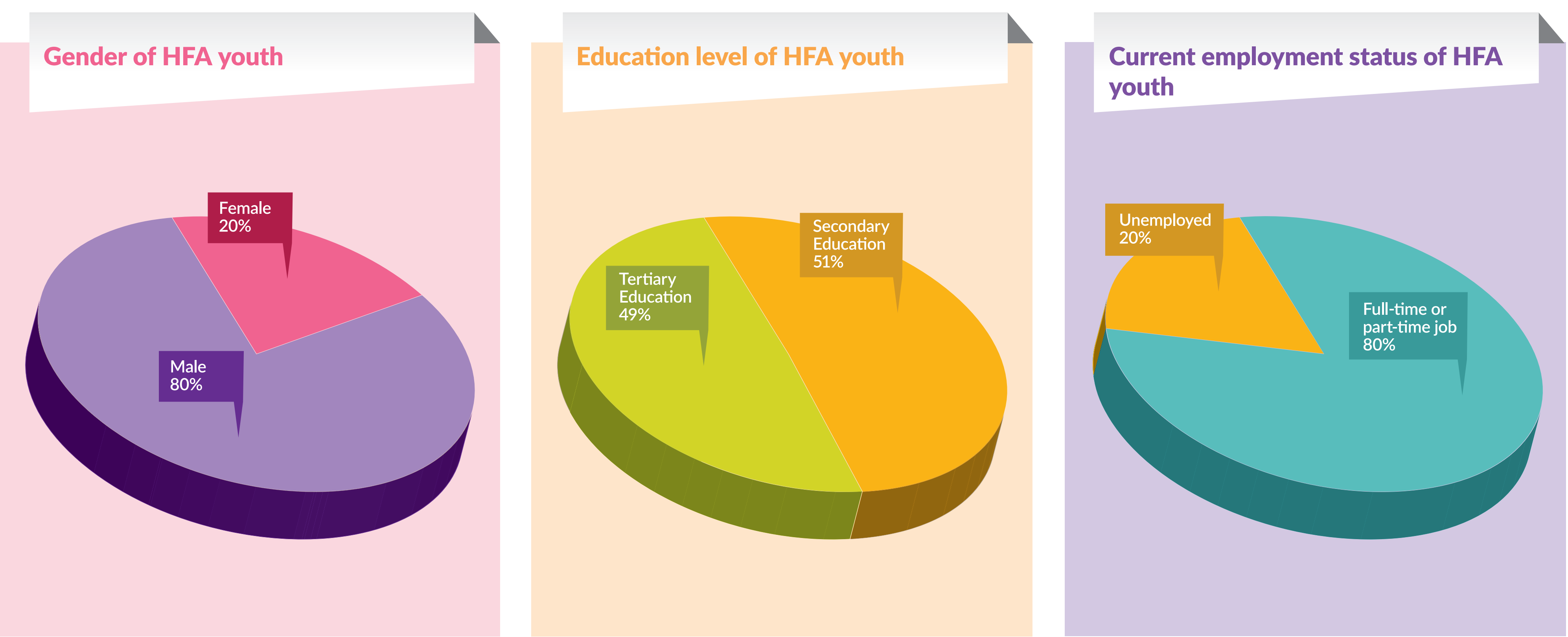
Objective

- The survey aimed to collect data from HFA youth, parents, employers to
1. explore patterns and trends in HFA youth employment
 2. examine discrepancy between HFA youths' and parents' job expectation
 3. assess level of support needed for employers

Method

Questionnaires are distributed to HFA youth, their parents and employers through November 2017 to February 2018 by convenience sampling. Forty-five HFA youths who are currently working or have worked before completed a questionnaire on employment history, employment expectations and difficulties faced during employment. Forty-five parents filled out a questionnaire on their employment expectations and their perspective on their children's employment difficulties. Twenty-seven employers who currently employs or have employed an HFA youth before completed a questionnaire on their perspective on HFA youth job performance and support needed for employers.

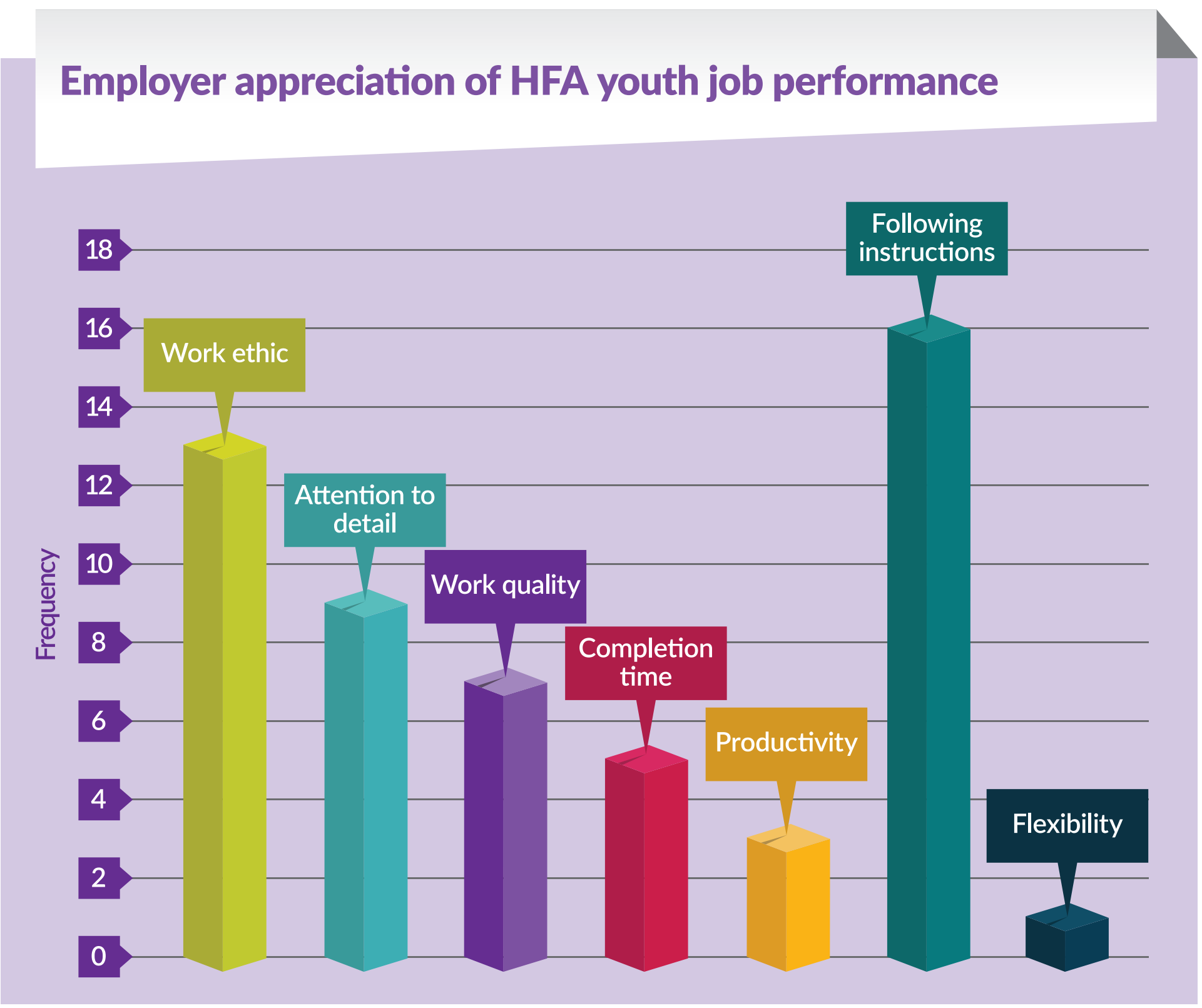
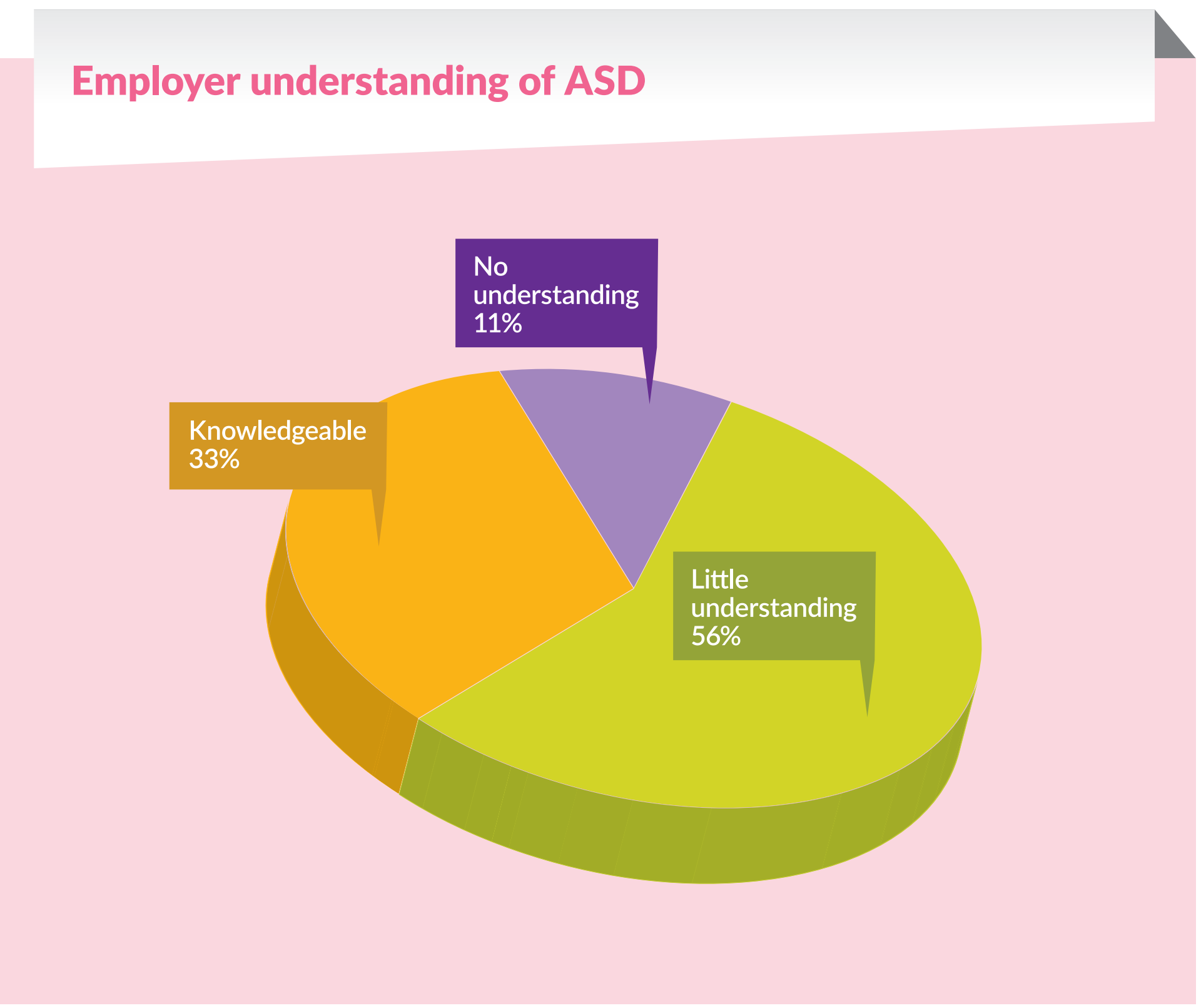
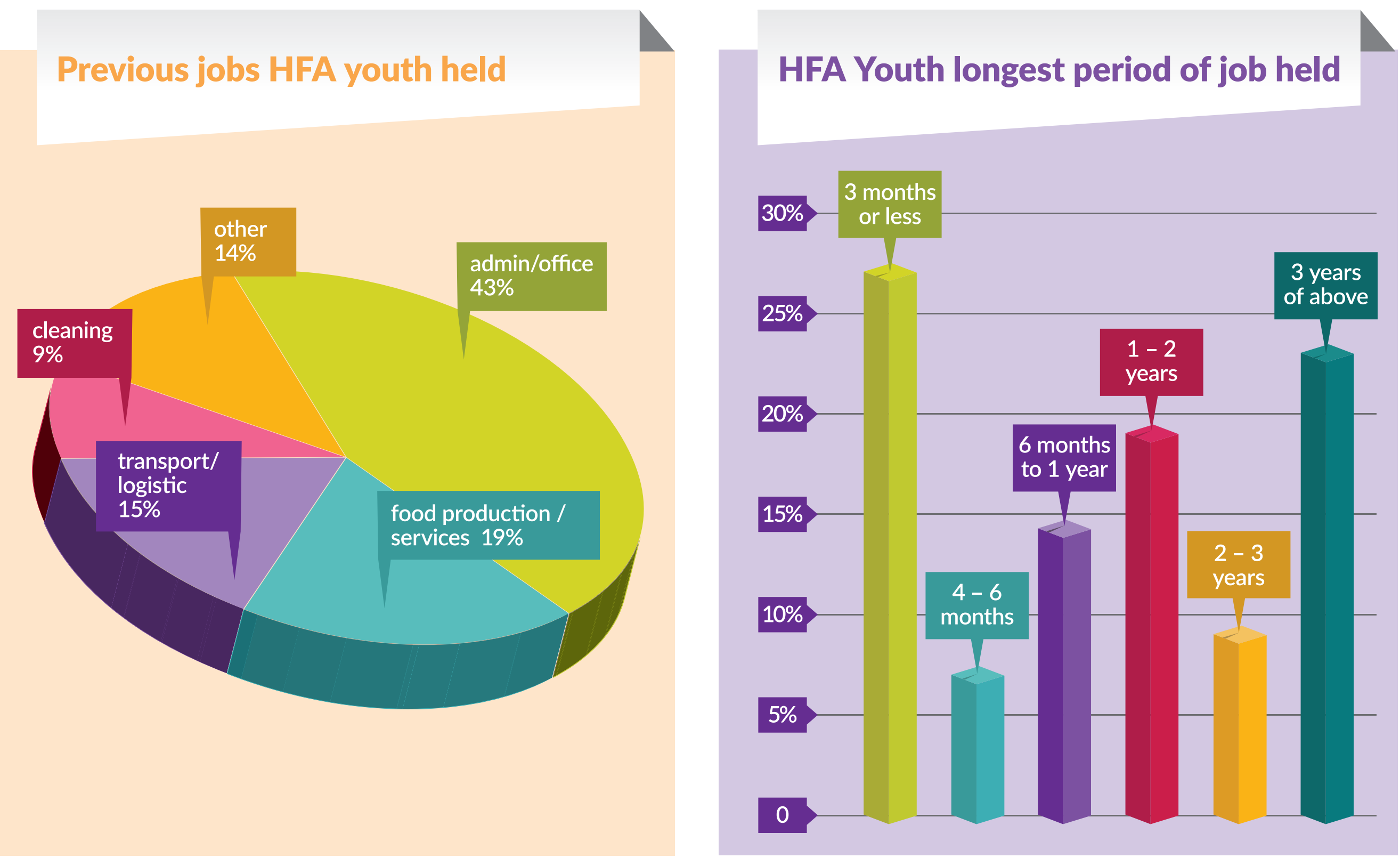
Background of HFA youth



Findings

Top 3 Perceived Difficulties At Work (Frequency)	Youth	Parent
Communication difficulties with colleague/supervisor	31	35
Difficulties during interview to express themselves	25	30
Ability not matching job requirement	25	25

Preferred Job Type	Youth	Parent
Office/Administration	48%	67%
Information Technology	15%	14%
Food Production/Services	15%	9%
Transport/Logistics	4%	5%
Cleaning/Maintenance	7%	2%



Conclusion

- Despite 80% of HFA youth having employment, around 50% of youth cannot sustain a job for more than a year.
- Both HFA youth and their parents agreed that the top three difficulties they faced in employment were: social communication difficulties with colleagues and employers, difficulty in expressing themselves which then create misunderstanding and youth's ability not matching up to the job's requirement.
- Both HFA youth and parents identified administrative and office work as their most preferred work industry, followed by information technology and food production/services.
- Around 70% of employers reported that they have little or no understanding of HFA youth's needs in employment and gaining more understanding of HFA youth at the workplace is the most endorsed support needed.

Recommendations

- Introduce career planning as early as possible in order to enhance HFA youth's awareness of their career interests and their own abilities; Job matching and placement opportunities that fit with the job markets needs as well as continuous support to both HFA youth and employers during employment.
- Maintain a collaborative relationship between employers and employment support agency to provide accommodations and support, arrange educational briefings for staff to gain a better understanding of ASD youth, which contribute to helping ASD youth assimilate into the job culture and creating an accepting and inclusive work environment.
- Parents are advised to discern their children's ability and interest to manage a realistic job expectations that could minimize the stress put forward onto their children when discrepancy happens.

賽馬會「啟程・職聘」支援計劃

Jockey Club StarTER: Employment Support Project for Young Persons with Special Needs

Heep Hong Society provides comprehensive support in employment and development for youth with autism spectrum disorder. Recently, the Society launched a new project to extend employment support service to youth with Specific Learning Disabilities and Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder. The 3-year Jockey Club StarTER Project offers one-stop career planning, employment training and multi-disciplinary support to youth of different abilities so as to maximize their strengths.

Enquires: 3158 8359

1. Career planning

2. Vocational training

3. Supported internship

4. Individualised career support

5. Family support network

Jockey Club StarTER Project services

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