

Executive Summary

Demographic characteristics

1. In 1996, there were a total of 1,300,085 young people aged 10 to 24 in Hong Kong, constituting 20.9% of the total population. The relative size of the youth population had shown a continuous trend of decrease since the 1970s.
2. In terms of nationality, most local young people were British with right of abode in Hong Kong only. On the other hand, the proportion of young local residents born outside Hong Kong and China had shown signs of increase.
3. A gradual shift of the youth population from Hong Kong Island and Kowloon to the New Territories can be observed over the past 15 years.
4. The percentage of the youth never married population had also increased over the same period of time.

Family Background And Dynamics

1. Studies have found that most young people considered their family life to be a happy one.
2. In terms of parental control, most young people did not in general feel that their parents were too harsh on them. On the other hand, more young people preferred to talk to their mother than to their father.

Physical Health

1. The expectation of life at birth in Hong Kong had continued to rise over the last 25 years. On the other hand, the mortality rates among the youth age groups had continued to drop.
2. The age-specific fertility rates of the youth population had also gone down significantly.
3. The mean weight and height of the local young people had also increased over the last 30 years.
4. While the basic diet of the local young people was reported to be good, the problem of obesity had begun to emerge for all youth age groups.
5. The number of road traffic casualties for the youth population (10-24) had decreased significantly over the past 25 years.

6. Despite the fact that the number of smokers had shown signs of decrease over the last decade, the rates of young daily smokers had shown signs of increase within certain age-specific groups. On the other hand, studies have found that most young people were for the idea of implementing legislative control prohibiting the sale of cigarettes and liquor to young people below 18 even among smokers and drinkers.
7. Studies have found that most local young people were satisfied with their physical appearance. Moreover, most felt that to be good looking was more important than to be a good person.

Mental Health

1. By employing different scoring methods, studies have found that a significant portion of the local youth population could be classified as psychologically at risk. Moreover, when faced with stressful life events, only about half of the young people would seek help from others. For those who would, parents, friends, and classmates remained to be the more popular choices.
2. Although there was no exact estimate, the number of young drug abusers in Hong Kong should be quite small. Peer influence and curiosity remained to be the main reasons for young people taking drugs.
3. Overall speaking, the suicide rates of the youth population had shown little significant change in the past decade.

Education

1. The percentage of the youth population studying full-time in school or educational institution had continued to rise over the last 15 years. Furthermore, more and more young people were receiving tertiary or higher education.

Non-attendance And School Dropouts

1. Contrary to what some might think, the number of suspected school dropouts had been on the decline both at the Primary and Junior Secondary level over the past decade. Most school dropouts had experienced problems at school before dropping out.

Economic Characteristics

1. Because of increased educational opportunities in both secondary and tertiary levels, the labour force participation rate had in general decreased among the youth age groups.

2. Overall speaking, more working youth were working in the area of wholesale, retail, and import/export trades, restaurants & hotels. In terms of sex difference, there were more working youth males in the construction industry, and more working youth females in the community, social, and personal services.
3. When choosing a job, most young people would consider the salary/benefits, their interests, and the career prospects offered. Besides, studies have also found that more young people would like to go into the commercial/sales sector.
4. In terms of spending and saving, studies have found that apart from the basic, necessary expenditures, most young people spent their money on entertainment and hobbies, as well as clothes. Moreover, most young people indicated that they had the habit of saving for emergencies and sense of security.

Youth Culture And Development

1. Contrary to what some might think, studies have found that most young people in Hong Kong did not place high significance on their material life. Rather, they treasured kinship and bonds the most.
2. In the area of media exposure, studies have found that about half of the local young people had the habit of reading newspapers every day, the more popular contents being social and entertainment news. For TV, more young people preferred drama series and news programmes. As for the radio, more young people preferred song dedication and pop music programmes, news and weather reports, and D. J. talk shows.
3. Shopping, family chat, ball-games, and housework were found to be the more popular leisure time activities among young people.
4. In the area of new technology, studies have found that more than 80% of the local young people had used the computer before mainly for playing games, watching VCDs, and doing work/homework.

Civic, Social, And Political Attitudes And Participation

1. A significant number of the youth population participated in youth organizations, uniformed groups, and voluntary service.
2. In the area of environmental concern, studies have found that more young people had participated in environmental activities than other age groups.
3. Most young people felt that social discrimination did exist in Hong Kong, the more serious being sex and racial discrimination.
4. Studies have also found that a significant portion of the young people did take note of news about foreign countries, especially regarding the political and social scenes.

5. In the area of corruption, studies have found that most young people would not give bribes even if a problem could be solved by doing so. On the other hand, not many young people would report cases of bribery to the authorities.
6. More young people felt that the most important civic rights were freedom and democracy, and the most important civic responsibilities were voting and obeying the law.
7. In terms of voting behaviour, studies have found that most young people had voted in the Legislative Council Elections according to their own preference, and that they had given priority to the candidates' past performance as well as platform or political views when deciding who to vote for.
8. While most young people trusted the local government, they nevertheless felt that the transparency of the government was not high enough. In terms of performance, studies have found that more young people were satisfied with what the government had done on education, and were most dissatisfied with the government's performance on housing.
9. In terms of national identity, studies have found that young people in Hong Kong were less proud to be Chinese than those in Guangzhou or Beijing.
10. While most young people were confident about the future of Hong Kong, they were less optimistic about the future of the political environment and the living standards of their families.

Youth And Crime

1. While juveniles (7-15) and young persons (16-20) together constituted about 30% of the total number of offenders over the past years, the offender rate had been substantively higher for young persons than for other age groups.
2. On the whole, burglary and theft was the most common type of offence among juveniles and young persons.

Youth Sexuality

1. Studies have found that both boys and girls had become better prepared for their sexual growth psychologically over the years. Parents, friends/schoolmates, and the media were found to be more influential in affecting young people's sexual attitudes.
2. Longitudinal studies have discovered that the frequency of the more intimate dating behaviours among young people (e.g. kissing, caressing) had increased quite significantly over the past 15 years. Nevertheless, most young people in Hong Kong still wanted to get married and have children.

New Arrivals

1. In 1996, there were about 200,000 local residents who were born in China (including Taiwan) and had lived for less than seven years in Hong Kong. For those from the Mainland, most had come from the Guangdong province.
2. Although more young new arrivals were satisfied with their living conditions, many had encountered problems at school.