



YOUTH AS CONSUMERS

1



Chapter Overview

The youth represents a period in life when a person makes the transition from the dependence of childhood to the independence of adulthood. This particular life stage is filled with dreams and ambitions. During the youth stage, a number of social, economic, biological, and demographic events may occur, such as education, courtship, and preparation for entrance into the job market. With the expansion of global higher education and delayed marriage, the transition to adulthood extends over a longer period of time. As a result, the youth stage is becoming increasingly important for educators, marketers, and policy makers (Assaad and Roudi-Fahimi, 2007).

The global youth market is important to international marketers and advertisers because of its size, homogeneity and its growing purchasing power. Giges's (1991) study found the life styles and consumption habits of people aged 14–34 around the world to be similar, especially in terms of their consumption of soft drinks, beer and footwear. Among the world population of 1.8 billion youth aged 10–24, 1.0 billion (61%) live in Asia (Nugent, 2006), making the Asian youth segment an important target market for products as well as social ideas. They also have relatively more disposable income than their Western counterparts because of more generous allowances and income from part-time jobs (Sharma, 2002). Within this region, Hong Kong is a major market with a distinct status as a world city and a long history of western influence (Fam and Waller, 2006).

This chapter consists of three sections. The first section analyzes the social and economic situation of youth in Hong Kong. The second section focuses on the consumption environment and values prevailing in the society. The third section reports a recent survey about the consumption values and money management of youth in Hong Kong. Youth is loosely defined as the age group from 12 to 30. This discussion will use the terms teens, adolescents, young adults, young people, and youths interchangeably.



Social and Economic Statistics of Youth in Hong Kong

In mid-2009, the total population of Hong Kong was 7,008,300 (Census and Statistics Department, 2009d). Young people aged 10–29 composed 25.6% of that total. Their proportion had remained stable at around 26% since 2005 (see Table 1.1). Until 1996, young males outnumbered young females in all age groups (The University of Hong Kong, 2006). From 2005 onwards, the sex ratio in the 10–19 age group has remained stable at around 1,050 males per 1,000 females, while the ratio for the age group 20–29 dropped steadily from 912 in 2005 to 825 in 2009 (see Table 1.2). The low sex ratio among the 20–29 age group can be attributed to an influx of female foreign domestic helpers, of whom a major portion are in this age group (Census and Statistics Department, 2008a).

Hong Kong's youth are not evenly distributed geographically. In 2006, the districts with the highest proportion of youth were Shatin and Yuen Long, and the districts with the lowest proportion of youth were Wan Chai and the Islands District (Census and Statistics Department, 2008c). Yuen Long is on Hong Kong's northern fringes, and the high proportion of young people in that area stems in part from an influx of young immigrants from mainland China.

Table 1.1 Youth Population, 2005–2009

	Population			
	Age 10–19	Age 20–29	Age 10–29	% of total*
2005	849.2	957.6	1,806.8	26.5
2006	848.3	974.7	1,823.0	26.6
2007	853.5	981.6	1,835.1	26.4
2008	843.3	990.0	1,833.3	26.3
2009	806.6	988.5	1,795.1	25.6

*refers to mid-year population

Source: Census and Statistics Department (2009d)

**Table 1.2 Hong Kong's Sex Ratio* by Age, 2005–2009**

	Age 10–19	Age 20–29
2005	1,042	912
2006	1,046	856
2007	1,050	840
2008	1,054	830
2009	1,055	825

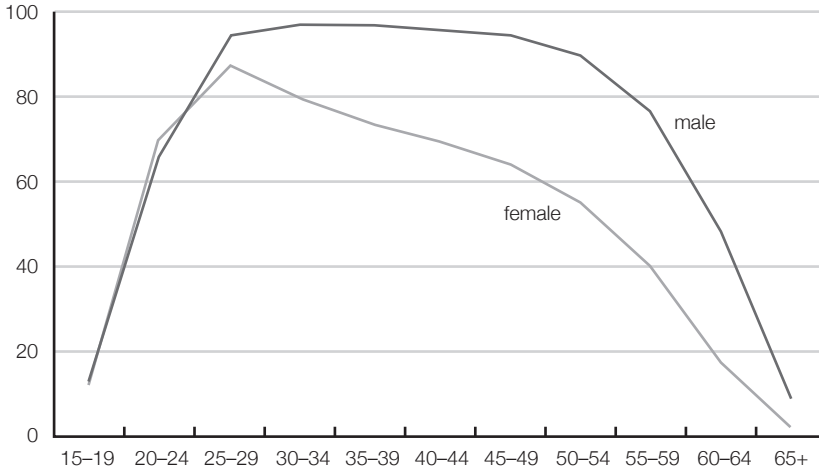
*Sex ratio refers to number of males to 1,000 females in the respective age group

Source: Census and Statistics Department (2009d)

In 2008, the labor force participation rates of males and females age 15–19 are 13% and 12% respectively. The labor force participation rates of males and females age 20–24 are 66% and 70% respectively (Census and Statistics Department, 2009b). As a majority of the population in the 15–19 age group is studying, the 15–19 age group therefore has a lower labor force participation rate than the 20–29 age group (see Figure 1.1). This pattern holds true for both females and males (The University of Hong Kong, 2006). Labor force participation includes those currently employed as well as those looking for work. An expansion of opportunities for higher education in Hong Kong in recent years has led more young people continue their studies, and labor participation rates among those aged 15–19 have registered a steady decrease. The labor participation rates among males aged 20–29 has also dropped steadily. However, a similar drop has not been observed among females aged 20–29 (The University of Hong Kong, 2006).

In 2008, there were 335,200 young people aged 15–24 working in Hong Kong (Census and Statistics Department, 2009c). Twenty-eight percent of them were engaged in the public administration, social and personal services while 26% were engaged in retail, accommodation, and food services (see Table 1.3).

The school attendance rate for the age group 16–19 increased from 83.5% in 2006 to 85.5% in 2008 (Labor and Welfare Bureau,

**Figure 1.1 Labor Force Participation Rates by Sex and Age Group, 2008**

Source: Census and Statistics Department (2009b)

Table 1.3 Working Youths by Industry, 2008

Industry	Number	%
Public administration, social and personal services	93,900	28.0
Retail, accommodation and food services	88,400	26.4
Financing, insurance, real estate, professional and business services	52,800	15.7
Import/export trade and wholesale	44,600	13.3
Transportation, storage postal and courier services and information and communications	33,400	10.0
Construction	13,800	4.1
Manufacturing	7,700	2.3
Others	700	0.2
Total*	335,200	100.0

*Figures may not add up to total due to rounding

Source: Census and Statistics Department (2009c)



2009). The school attendance rate for the age group 20–24 increased from 33.3% to 35.7% over the same period (Census and Statistics Department, 2009c). Because of the increased post-secondary education opportunities, the proportion of the youth population aged 20–24 with post-secondary education increased from 55% in 2006 to 58% in 2008 (Labor and Welfare Bureau, 2009). Similarly, the proportion of the population aged 15 and over with post-secondary education increased from 24% in 2006 to 25% in 2008 (Census and Statistics Department, 2009b).

Some data is also available about the participation of young people in Hong Kong in sports and cultural activities. Young people aged 10–19 comprise a disproportionate high percentage of registered borrowers in the public libraries. The number of borrowers aged 10–19 has increased from 623,000 in 2001 to 696,000 in 2005. Youth aged 15–19 are more likely to take part in different kinds of sports and recreation programs. Statistics show that 36% of young people aged 15–19 and 14% of young people aged 20–24 participate in recreation and sports programs organized by Hong Kong's Leisure and Cultural Services Department. More than two-thirds (71%) of the young participants in sporting activities reported that an advantage of participation in sports is to become physically fit. About one-third (32%) reported that an advantage of participating in sports is to make friends. The sports participation rates among aged 13–19 and aged 20–39 were 85% and 67% respectively. They usually played sports with friends and neighbors (Chinese University of Hong Kong, 2009). A survey conducted by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department showed that in 2004 about 9% of the audience for cultural and leisure activities were youth aged 15–19 (The University of Hong Kong, 2006).

In 2006, there were 2,226,546 households in Hong Kong (Census and Statistics Department, 2008b). Their characteristics are summarized in Tables 1.4 and 1.5. “One un-extended nuclear family” remained the dominant type of household, with the proportion of such households increasing from 64% in 1996 to 67% in 2006. This data is collected through the latest round of

**Table 1.4 Domestic Households by Household Composition, 2006**

Household Composition	Number	%
One person	367,653	16.5
One un-extended nuclear family	1,492,809	67.0
One vertically extended nuclear family	165,685	7.4
One horizontally extended nuclear family	15,761	0.7
Two or more nuclear families	69,364	3.1
Related persons forming no nuclear family	66,794	3.0
Unrelated persons only	48,480	2.2
Total	2,226,546	100.0

Source: Census and Statistics Department (2008a)

Table 1.5 Domestic Households by Household Size, 2008

Household Size (persons)	Number ('000)	%
1	362.1	15.9
2	568.9	25.0
3	541.7	23.8
4	510.9	22.4
5	209.7	9.2
6+	84.1	3.7
Total	2,247.1	100.0

Source: Census and Statistics Department (2009b)

population census. Small households have become increasingly common. Between 1996 and 2008, the number of households with one to three members increased from 54% to 65%. The increase in the number of smaller households can be attributed to people's increasing willingness to live alone, more young people living apart



from their parents after marriage, and couples choosing to have at most one child. In contrast, the number of households with five or more persons declined from 22% in 1996, to 13% in 2008 (Census and Statistics Department, 2009b). The number of persons living in domestic households did not increase as quickly as the number of households, leading to a reduction in household size. The average household size declined from 3.3 in 1996 to 3.0 in 2008 (Census and Statistics Department, 2009b). Hong Kong also experienced a general drop in fertility, so the proportion of households without children aged below 15 increased from 61% in 1996 to 70% in 2006, and the number of households with children aged under 15 decreased. For those households with children aged below 15, the average number of children dropped from 1.6 to 1.4 over the period (Census and Statistics Department, 2008b). In other words, Hong Kong now has more small households and fewer children per family than in the past.

Prevailing Consumption Environment and Values

The consumption environment of Hong Kong has the following characteristics:

- A competitive education system
- A cramped living environment
- Keen interest in luxurious brands

This section will discuss each of these characteristics in detail and elaborate its impact on youth consumption.

A competitive education system

Chinese societies place strong emphasis on education. Hong Kong children attend kindergarten from the age of three. The government provides nine years of free education (six years of primary education plus three years of secondary education) for children from the age of 6 to 15. After the age of 15, students need to take two public

**New Academic Structure “334”**

The “334” New Academic Structure representing three years of junior secondary education (S1–S3), three years of senior secondary education (S4–S6) and four years of university education was introduced. It was implemented in 2009 for the senior secondary education. Under the new structure, students need to take only one public examination to compete for university entrance.

The new curriculum was designed to encourage out-of-campus learning experience, and to foster a broader scope of views for students.

examinations at around 17 and 19 to compete for places in the public universities (Hong Kong SAR Government, 2004).

The educational system in Hong Kong has been criticized for being examination-oriented, promoting passive learning, “spoon-feeding” its students, and for lacking creativity (Children’s Council Working Committee, 2005). Parents’ emphasis on academic performance creates a highly competitive educational environment for their children. Forty-seven percent of children of school age receive private tuition at home or at educational institutions outside school hours. In 2004, the average time they spent on tutorial lessons after school was 4.8 hours a week (Children’s Council Working Committee, 2005). Households with students taking private tuition spend on average HK\$1,150 each month on tutoring (Census and Statistics Department, 2007).

Hong Kong has long been known as a city that lives with a great deal of stress and pressure. Life is fast paced. Leisure time is spent trying to relax, avoiding stress, and dreaming (Fam and Waller, 2006). With high pressures from their studies, Hong Kong’s young people enjoy very little leisure time. A survey of primary and secondary school children and youth in Hong Kong found that watching television, playing computer games or surfing the Internet at home were the most common ways of spending leisure time (Children’s Council Working Committee, 2005).

Changes in family structure and reduced family size may reduce young people’s experience of external authority, but at the same



Private tuition

The educational system in Hong Kong has been criticized for being examination-oriented, passive and "spoon-feeding". Entrance into university depends mainly on performance at two public examinations, i.e. The Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE), and the Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination (HKALE). Each year, there are over 100,000 students taking the HKCEE and 38,000 students taking the HKALE. In view of the keen competition among examination participants, private tuition schools prevail. These schools focus on examination preparation. They help students with revision notes and examination skills. By analyzing trends of previous rounds of examinations, they provide forecast of examination questions. Students can then spend more time on selected topics and as a result, improve in efficiency. When the examination results are released, these tuition schools often advertised on front covers of major newspapers photos of their students who got the A grades. The number of questions that they predicted for examinations makes the teacher a successful fortune-teller. The number of students got A in a certain subject and the number of questions predicted become major selling points of the schools. The most popular private tuition schools in Hong Kong include Modern Education, Kings Glory, Beacon College and Ever Learning. Most of these schools run daytime as well as evening class programs. Tuition schools spent large amount of money on print and out-of-home advertising. Some of the teachers are portrayed as examination lifesavers, examination experts, or subject kings. Some of the schools have attracted too many students that the classes need to be conducted through video conferencing technology. For elementary school students, private tuition are usually conducted at students' home using one-on-one mode.

time increase the stress they feel. With fewer siblings, children in the family are receiving more attention, nurturance, and even indulgence. The Confucian family values prevalent in Hong Kong oblige children to offer financial and emotional support to their parents for life. This intensifies from an early age the pressure to achieve success. Small, indulgent families, over-protection of children, and the absence of an extended family as a resource for support may result in a younger generation that is less tolerant of stress compared to previous generations (Lam et al., 2004). Some young people may come to use consumption as a way to escape from the stress of reality.

Influenced by Confucian principles, the family interaction in Chinese societies emphasizes parental control, along with strict discipline, emphasis on education, filial piety, respect for seniors, avoidance of conflict, and family obligations (Chao, 1983; Glenn,



1983; Ho, 1989). A survey has found that Chinese parents (and even immigrant Chinese parents in the U.S.) tend to consider parental control, encouraging independence and emphasis on achievement as more important than Caucasian-American parents do (Lin, 1990). Another qualitative study has found that parent-child relationships in Hong Kong tend to be evolving, with constant negotiations over hierarchy and equality, obedience and disobedience, with quarrels as well as praise and spankings (Luk-Fong, 2005). This seems to imply that parents perceive children as on the one hand vulnerable and needing guidance, but on the other hand competent and able to make independent choices. Chapter 2 will explore how the perception of young consumers as both vulnerable and competent manifests itself in parent-child communication about consumption. In general, Hong Kong young people are given high autonomy in consumption of product categories their parents approve of.

A cramped living environment

Hong Kong's population density of 6,145 persons/km² is exceedingly high by international standards (Hui, Lam, and Ho, 2006). To accommodate seven million people in a land area of only 1,100 square kilometers, high-rise housing is almost universal (Ho et al., 2004). According to Hong Kong's 2006 by-census, private sector housing provides an average of 3.7 rooms per household and 1.3 rooms per person. However, the corresponding figures for subsidized public housing were 2.4 rooms per household and 0.8 rooms per person (Census and Statistics Department, 2008a). It is essential to note, however, that the average living area occupied by a household (public and private housing) is only 45 square meters, and the average living area is only 14 square meters per person (Planning Department, 1999). In this respect, living conditions in Hong Kong must be considered below par when compared with other countries (Hui, Lam, and Ho, 2006). As a result of the cramped living environment, large family gatherings tend to be held in restaurants, and friends are usually received outside the home (Rooney, 2001).



Langham Place (朗豪坊)

Langham Place in Mong Kok consists of a hotel, an office building and a shopping mall. Mong Kok is one of the most densely populated areas in Hong Kong. Opened in 2004, the Langham Place has several innovative designs, including the Happy Man sculpture at the entrance, and the longest indoor mall escalator. The indoor escalator divided the shopping mall into two zones, with the youth zones above the eighth floor and upmarket shopping on the seventh floor or below. The twelfth and the thirteenth floors are designated for digital images and music entertainment. Live music shows are organized seven nights a week. The mall at Langham Place opens late until 11pm. It becomes a hot spot for youngsters. A television drama series launched in 2005 adopted the Langham Place as the backdrop of the storyline.



Hong Kong has long been promoted as a shopping paradise. The construction of gigantic shopping malls in the early '90s catered to local people who could afford to spend and who had become more style-conscious. Shopping malls now form an essential part of the lives of the local people. Young and old alike hang out at shopping malls. Families visit the shopping malls for dining, shopping, and entertaining (Lui, 2001). A global online survey conducted among 22,000 Internet users in 42 markets found that 93% of Hong Kong respondents described shopping as a form of entertainment. This is much higher than the 74% of all respondents saying so. Hong Kong respondents also ranked first in their frequency of going shopping, with 34% shopping once a week, often just for something to do (ACNielsen, 2006).



Keen interest in luxurious brands

Consumer choice is increasingly seen as the foundation of today's post-modern era in which consumer lifestyles and mass consumption dominate people's lives (Lyon, 1994). Bourdieu (1984) argued that consumption is a process through which one's cultural capital (i.e., knowledge and sophistication) is demonstrated and one's identification with a particular social class is confirmed. When Hong Kong was ruled from Britain, the government did not encourage the younger generation to focus on cultural or national identity, the status of the government, or active participation in politics (Morris and Morris, 2000). Immigrants from China who had escaped from Communist rule formed a majority of Hong Kong's population in the 1960s and 1970s. There was a general aversion to politics, and "utilitarian familism" prevailed. Hong Kong people focused on the material interests of the family, avoided class based activities, and distrusted political leaders (Lau, 1981). Despite general improvement in their economic situation, Hong Kong people remained materialistic in their concerns and world-view (Ho and Leung, 1997). A survey indicated that in 1997, the three most important personal values were family, money, and health (ACNielsen, 2007). Hong Kong's youth were described as tending to identify with narrow family interests, as individualistic, and as having a weak sense of community (Lau and Kuan, 1988). What really mattered was always money. Wealth and distinction from others in the social hierarchy were demonstrated through the consumption of luxurious products (Mathews and Lui, 2001). A content analysis of newspaper advertisements found that hedonistic themes such as "pretty," "luxury," "prestige," "foreign," and "fun" were often portrayed in Hong Kong ads (Tse, Belk, and Zhou, 1989). Enjoyment is also the dominant value portrayed in television commercials in Hong Kong (Moon and Chan, 2005). Yau (1988) has argued that Chinese are under strong pressure to meet the expectations of others or to impress others through conspicuous consumption.



Many luxury product marketers consider Hong Kong as a major market for their products. It has been estimated that at least 50 designer brands have opened their own shops and branches in town (ACNielsen, 2008). Global market research has shown that Hong Kong leads the Asia-Pacific region in the desire to purchase luxury brands if money is not an issue. Forty percent of respondents in Hong Kong claimed to buy such products. The regional average was 15% (ACNielsen, 2008). According to the study, Hong Kong tops the world in terms of the proportion of people claiming to buy Gucci (31%), Louis Vuitton (27%), and Burberry (26%) products. To maintain awareness, close to 500 million Hong Kong dollars was spent on advertising in this market in 2007 by the 50-odd luxury apparel and accessory brands monitored by Nielsen's Advertising Information Service. The top spenders were Christian Dior, Chanel, and Louis Vuitton (ACNielsen, 2008).

A Survey on Consumption Patterns and Money Management

A 2007 survey of Hong Kong people found that 42% of respondents were confident about the economic outlook. Respondents aged 18–24 were the most optimistic, with 56% of them expressing confidence (ACNielsen, 2007).

A television commercial for personal loans targets young adults with a rap style jingle, “Show me the money!” The commercial starts with a visual of the two words “Your money,” and the Cantonese lyric can be translated as,

- *I don't give it to my mom, nor give it to my dad,*
- *I don't need to raise a family instead,*
- *Where does the money go?*
- *Heaven knows and earth knows,*
- *Only I don't know,*
- *Show me the money,*



- *Money is gone every month, how cruel the truth,*
- *A five-cent coin is all that's left,*
- *Early in the month,*
- *Show me the money,*
- *The account is cut by a portion every month,*
- *Why does the economy bear the brunt?*
- *Money, money, I miss the fun.*

The jingle portrays young people as poor money managers. Is this true?

This was explored by a survey of 1,072 secondary school students aged 11–19 conducted from March to June 2007. The sample came from six secondary schools. The questionnaires were self-administered by the respondents. Two-thirds of the sample were boys. Sixty-seven percent of the respondents were born in Hong Kong, 27% in mainland China, and the remaining 6% elsewhere. About one-sixth of the sample claimed to receive HK\$100 or less (i.e., less than US\$12) allowance each week, 40% received HK\$101 to HK\$500 each week (equivalent to US\$12 to US\$60) and the remaining 43% said that they received HK\$501 to HK\$2,000 (equivalent to US\$61 to US\$250) each week. The results reported in this chapter are from a press release describing the results (H.K.S.K.H. Kowloon City Children and Youth Integrated Service—Jockey Club Youth Express, 2007) and from personal communication with the researcher in charge of the study.

The consumption patterns of the respondents are summarized in Table 1.6. Their major source of income was allowance. Less than 10% of the sample had other income, mainly from part-time jobs. Most of the respondents were relying on their families for financial support. Forty percent of the respondents expressed the opinion that their income was not enough. When their income was not sufficient to cover their expenses, a majority of the respondents said they would seek additional support from family members. While over one-third of them would draw down previous savings, one-quarter said they would borrow money from friends. It is interesting that

**Table 1.6 Consumption Patterns (N=1,072)**

	%
What is your major source of income?	
Allowance	89
Part-time jobs	8
Others	3
Do you have enough income?	
Yes	58
No	42
What happens when expenses exceed income? *	
Get/borrow money from family members	57
Use savings	37
Borrow from friends	25
Do you have saving habits?	
Yes	57
No	43
Purpose of saving for those who have saving habits*	
For emergency	73
For future purchase	58
For entertainment	43
How do you spend your money?	
Spend within my income	51
As I wish, no particular plan	38
Spend on credit	11
Have you experienced money problems?	
Yes	59
No	41
Where to seek help for those have experienced money problems	
Not seeking help from others	51
Family members	30
Friends	10
Teachers and others	9
What is your major means of payment for consumption?	
Cash	90
Prepaid card	7
Debit card	1.5
Credit card	1.5
Have you ever bought online?	
Yes	18
No	82

* Can select more than one answer

Source: H.K.S.K.H. Kowloon City Children and Youth Integrated Service—Jockey Club Youth Express (2007)



the percentage of respondents reporting enough income is the same as the percentage claiming to have savings. Most of the respondents said they saved up for emergencies, while over half also claimed that they saved up for consumption. Fifty-one percent reported that they watch their limits and spend within their incomes. Over one-third of the sample did not plan their budget and spent as they wish. A small percentage of the sample claimed to make purchases on credit.

Sixty percent of the sample reported that they had experienced money problems. Most of these respondents had tried to tackle the problem on their own. Thirty percent of them turned to family members for help, while the remaining 19% sought help from friends and others. Ninety percent of their consumption transactions were settled in cash. Less than 2% were paid by credit card. Most of the banks in Hong Kong issue credit cards only to applicants aged 18 or above, so credit card ownership was low among the respondents. Over one-sixth of the sample had experience of buying online.

Table 1.7 summarizes the respondents' consumption motivations and the factors they perceived as influencing their consumption. The respondents reported that their consumption was mainly motivated by practical needs, but over one-quarter of the sample agreed that trends guided their consumption to some extent. One-sixth said they were motivated by brand names. One-tenth admitted to being motivated by peer approval, while 9% agreed that at least some of their consumption was triggered by vanity.

Friends were perceived to be the major source of influence on consumption. One-third of the sample, however, maintained that they were not influenced by any socializing agents. The percentages of respondents reporting that they were influenced by trends and by their parents were 22 and 21 respectively. Less than one-sixth reported that they were influenced by siblings. Obviously, friends are more influential in consumption than family members.

Respondents' attitudes toward money as well as the balance between money and ethics are summarized in Table 1.8. The results indicate that the respondents found money important. Over half of the sample agreed with the assertions that people work just to get

**Table 1.7 Consumption Motivations and Perceived Influence**

	%
What is your motivation for consumption? *	
Practical needs	78
Following trends	27
Brand name effect	18
Seeking peer approval	10
Vanity	9
Who influences your consumption?	
Friends	51
Nobody	34
Trends	22
Parents	21
Siblings	14

* Can select more than one answer

Source: H.K.S.K.H. Kowloon City Children and Youth Integrated Service—Jockey Club Youth Express (2007)

Table 1.8 Attitudes toward Money

	Disagree % *	Neutral %	Agree %
About Money			
Money is not all powerful	32	4	64
Work is all about money	37	7	56
With money, you'll have a better future	42	6	53
Money can buy happiness	47	5	48
Money is the most important thing in the world	48	6	46
Money helps to get friends	62	6	32
About money and ethics			
It is foolish to break the law for money	12	6	82
One should not be money's slave	19	8	73
One can use any means to earn money as long as it does not hurt anyone	45	8	47

* Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding

Source: H.K.S.K.H. Kowloon City Children and Youth Integrated Service—Jockey Club Youth Express (2007)



money and that money can guarantee a bright future. However, a majority of them reported that people should not be money's slave. They also found it foolish to break the law for money. Most of them agreed that money cannot buy happiness or friendship. There were nearly equal proportions of respondents who agreed or disagreed with the assertion that one can use any means to earn money as long as it doesn't hurt anyone. These results indicate that the young respondents took a positive attitude toward money. They see the power of money, but they also appreciate its limits. They do not think that people should be controlled by money. They perceive that abiding by the law and integrity is more important than money.

The respondents' attitudes toward saving and money management are summarized in Table 1.9. The table shows that the respondents agreed that saving is a way to protect against future uncertainties. Parents play an important role in socializing children about money management. A majority of the respondents reported that their parents encouraged them to live within their means and not over-spend. However, less than 60% of the respondents reported that their parents offered concrete help with money management. The results also indicate that money management practices were not popular among the respondents (see Table 1.10). Less than 20% of the respondents claimed to practice any one of the five money

Table 1.9 Attitudes toward Saving and Money Management

	Disagree %	Neutral %	Agree %
Saving helps to secure protection for retirement	9	8	83
My parents encourage me to save money	10	8	82
My parents forbid me to spend lavishly	13	8	79
My parents help me to manage money	33	10	57

Source: H.K.S.K.H. Kowloon City Children and Youth Integrated Service—Jockey Club Youth Express (2007)

**Table 1.10 Money Management Practices**

	Never %	Rarely %	Sometime %	Always %
Set saving goals	22	27	32	19
Set budget for consumption	24	27	34	15
Review consumption patterns	26	30	32	12
Keep receipts for reference	36	32	22	10
Record expenses	45	31	18	6

Source: H.K.S.K.H. Kowloon City Children and Youth Integrated Service—Jockey Club Youth Express (2007)

management tools listed in the table on a regular basis. Respondents were, however, likely to set saving goals and budgets. They were less likely to record expenses or to keep receipts for reference.

The respondents were asked to rate their money management abilities on a 5-point scale (1=low; 5=high). The mean score was 3.2, indicating that they were confident about their money management. Boys were more likely than girls to rate themselves at 4 or 5, and the girls were more likely to rate themselves at 1 or 2.

To summarize, the results of this study indicate that adolescents in Hong Kong recognize their roles as consumers in society. They have limited resources for spending. They rely heavily on their families for financial support. Most of their consumption is motivated by practical needs. Friends are a major source of influence on consumption. They perceive that parents are teaching them to live within their means and save money for the future. However, these adolescents do not practice money management skills regularly. Money is a common problem, and most young people attempt to solve it by themselves. Adolescents see the value of money, but also its limitations. They treasure money as well as other intangible qualities, and do not want to be controlled by money.



To conclude, this chapter has set the stage for our study of youth and consumption in Hong Kong. Young people in Hong Kong are an important market for products and ideas. Their source of income is mainly from the families. They are subjected to heavy study pressure in the examination-oriented education system. They are living in a cramped environment, and go out a lot, often for social connections. They live in an environment that ownership of luxury brands is highly desirable. They perceive friends as playing a dominant role in influencing their consumption. They see the value as well as the limitations of money. They seldom practice money management skills, but they are optimistic about their competence in managing money.