

What Makes Young People Feel Negative

Youth I.D.E.A.S. Think Tank Report No 10

For months the city's media have bombarded the public with stories of conflict, bitter politics, discontent and anxiety. Some experts believe that the roots of youth pessimism lie in a politicized atmosphere, intensified competition, low social mobility and distrust of governance. Is Hong Kong being stifled by pessimism?

Key findings

- Nearly two-thirds of survey respondents are optimistic about their future but 5.2% are pessimistic.
- About Hong Kong's future, over half are optimistic but 19.1% are pessimistic.
- Confidence in Hong Kong's economy was rated at a low average of 5.61 out of 10.
- Respondents were negative overall about the government and the Legislative Council rating them 4.59 and 4.28 respectively on a scale of 0 to 10.
- Social stability is most important factor for Hong Kong according to nearly half the respondents.
- The rule of law and freedom are the most important core values for 43.8% and 41.7% respectively.
- There is general lack of confidence in the implementation of "One Country, Two Systems."
- Nearly a quarter think they have no influence on government policies and 5.7% would take part in demonstrations and protests.

Suggestions and recommendations for government and public agencies

- Develop healthy living indicators to be monitored and published by government.
- Encourage positive energy in members of community.
- Find ways to deliver effective and constructive messages.
- Suggest means for improvements in governance and ways to tackle social problems. ■

Comments from Society & Livelihood Think Tank members

Justen Li, convener "In terms of GDP, Hong Kong maybe rich, but despite that Hong Kong people are hardly happy. GDP measures the market value of goods and services but it also includes many items that do not support wellbeing. Indicators of health, education and the state of the environment are where we should look for good measures of true richness and wellbeing."

Peann Tam, deputy convener "Emotion is infectious. Positive emotion can inspire and uplift. It is so important to deliver positive energy in society."

Carew Chan, deputy convener "The study shows that young people are generally displeased with Hong Kong's governance. It also highlights diminishing levels of trust in the government. Good governance means putting the needs of the people at the centre of policy-making and urgent action is needed to rebuild trust. The government should value views from various perspectives whenever implementing policy."

The report is based on responses from 522 15-34 year-olds to a territory-wide random sample telephone poll conducted in March 2016. There were also 20 face-to-face interviews among the same age group and five experts or specialist scholars were interviewed.

Full details and tables

yrc.hkfyg.org.hk/news.aspx?id=8d132c8b-8d7c-431d-91cf-628bc677f94c&corpname=yrc&i=9591