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Youth Scan

September 2007

From the National Youth Council

"Developing a Vibrant, Highly-Connected, and

Self-Sustaining Youth Sector, and Nurturing World-Ready Youth"

Bringing you snippets of youth trends and issues compiled from

diverse sources such as news reports, journals and press releases,

Youth Scan aims to help you stay in touch with the constantly evolving youth scene.

For this month, we will look at youth trends in China. Young people in the People's Republic of China (PRC) are experiencing new ideas and influences and adopting new trends faster than any other culture. In face of the impending 2008 Olympics games, we highlight three articles on Chinese youth:

1. China Youth Culture Study provides New Insight + Trend Forecasting in Fashion, Technology, Communication, Entertainment, Sports, Music
Hip Hop Press, May 31 2007

2. China's Me Generation
TIME, July 26 2007

3. Cooler living for China's Youth?
China Youth Daily, August 30 2007

In line with the National Youth Council (NYC)'s efforts in promoting and encouraging youth research, this month we highlight two Youth Research Fund (YRF) supported studies:

Celebrity Idolization Among Singaporean Adolescents
National Technological University of Singapore, Poo Yip Ling, 2006

From FANTasy to Reality: The Cosplay Experience
National University of Singapore, Koh Shi Lei, 2006

The full reports can be borrowed from the Research and Planning Section of NYC.
Please email research@nyc.gov.sg for more information.

Upcoming NYC Research Events

The quarterly Youth Research Lunchtime Seminar organized by the Research and Planning Section of NYC aims to provide a regular platform for researchers and youth workers to share research and best practices, and explore collaboration on research initiatives and youth programmes.

The fourth Youth Research Lunchtime Seminar is happening on

Date : Friday, 19 October 2007

Time : 10:30 am to 1:30 pm

Venue : *scape Youth Centre

The theme is "Help Seeking Behaviours and Stress Coping Strategies among Youths". The presenters at the Seminar are researchers from the National University of Singapore, Fei Yue Community Services and Students Care Service who will share findings from their recently concluded research studies.

Informative and insightful, this seminar will be relevant and useful for youth workers, health practitioners, and those who have a keen interest in youth issues. Don't miss out on the last Lunchtime Seminar of 2007!

For more information, please contact Ms Tan Pei Ling at 68399 171 or email: CHEN_Pei_Ling@pa.gov.sg

China Youth Culture Study provides New Insight + Trend Forecasting in Fashion, Technology, Communication, Entertainment, Sports, Music
Hip Hop Press, May 31 2007

Results released from Label Networks' Second Annual China Youth Culture Study clearly indicated that the youth culture marketplace of 15-25 year olds is the largest new market. Comprised of an entirely new generation, these youths grew up among massive economic reforms and are now adopting new trends and demanding Western brands in mass volume.

As the first generation of the one-child rule to have experienced economic reforms, open markets and capitalism, the youth market's developing culture is not only greatly influenced by Japanese, Korean and Western influences, it is also creating a lifestyle wholly of its own.

Selected highlights from the China Youth Study:

- Internet cafes as cultural hotspots – young people are online in massive numbers, with a large percentage doing online shopping and searching for new ideas and styles.
- Music Talent Shows are among the top influences in pop culture, giving rise to the popularity of TV show competitions, dance and martial arts participation.
- Basketball and hero Yao Ming continue to set new trends in sports with males and females taking up basketball. Youths are also greatly influenced by the American NBA.
- The rise of the Green Collar generation – A new future working class that is influenced by new thoughts about the environment, health and global well-being.

To read the full article, please click on the following link:

http://www.hiphoppress.com/2007/05/new_study_shows.html

(Retrieved on 6 September 2007)

China's Me Generation
TIME, July 26 2007
Simon Elegant

There are 300 million adults in China under the age of 30, a demographic cohort that is the chief beneficiary of China's economic boom. As shown in a recent study conducted by Credit Suisse First Boston, the income of 20 to 29 year olds has grown 34% in the last three years, by the far the biggest of any age group. As compared to past generation of Chinese elites, whose lives were defined by epic events such as the Cultural Revolution, the opening to the West, student protests at Tiananmen Square, the current Me generation is marked by apolitical pragmatism. As remarked by one of the interviewees, Silence Chen, "There's nothing we can do about politics, so there's no point in talking about it or getting involved."

The author attributes the lack of political ferment to the following reasons:

- Because of China's one child policy instituted in 1978, this is the first generation in which a majority is single children. Their solipsistic tendencies are stoked by a growing obsession with consumerism, the Internet and computer games. An interviewee, Vicky, tried to explain for the lack of interest in politics, "it's because our life is pretty good. I care about my rights when it comes to the quality of a waitress in a restaurant or a product I buy. When it comes to democracy and all that, that doesn't play a role in my life."
- Events such as the Great Leap Forward, Cultural Revolution and others have become ancient history to young Chinese whom have only tasted peace and experienced China's economic boom.

To read the full article, please click on the following link:

<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1647228,00.html> (Retrieved on 7 September 2007)

Cooler living for China's Youth?
China Youth Daily, August 30 2007

China Youth Daily, a major Chinese newspaper, recently carried out a survey on attitudes towards climate change and the environment. The survey hoped to raise awareness of sustainable consumption and to reveal attitudes of consumption among the youths.

The selected findings of the survey are highlighted as follow:

Public awareness of climate change

- High level of awareness of climate change is demonstrated among young people.
- Only 2 out of 10 surveyed misunderstood the problem, knew nothing about it or said that they did not care about it.
- Although climate change may be occurring, surveyed participants however believed that climate change will not greatly affect the current generation. Another view was that climate change may not necessarily be a bad thing.

Sustainable consumption in daily life

- The survey showed that 84% of participants agreed that car exhaust is the main cause of urban pollution.
- Although the vast majority surveyed thought that exhaust fumes were the main pollutant in cities, only 15% indicated that they would not buy a car, even if equipped with the means to do so. On the contrary, more than two-thirds said that they either would “definitely” (27%) or “possibly” (49%) buy a car, if they can afford one.
- Although participants are aware of the sources of urban air pollution, this does not affect their patterns of consumption. As long as they can afford it, the vast majority of people will still choose to buy a car.
- This particular sentiment goes to possibly suggest that, though young people wish to protect the environment and support sustainable consumption, they are not willing to sacrifice the quality of life for the cause.

Young people’s consumption patterns

- The top three material goals that participants most desired include owning a large home (38%), traveling abroad (21%) and owning a car (12%). Interestingly, these findings correspond almost exactly with the goals of young British consumers.
- Over consumption is increasing being viewed as part of a fashionable lifestyle. An ethos of competitive consumerism is being promoted by commercial organizations and tempts people into replacing consumer products more frequently than ever.
- The survey also shows that 77% those surveyed believed that there are not enough energy-saving products on the Chinese market.

The effects of environmental awareness

- The survey showed that 58.8% of participants would like the government to provide good examples for the public to emulate. Another 78% see environment protection as responsibility of the government.
- The findings are also similar to the sentiments expressed by their UK counterparts where young British consumers also expect the government to take up the cause of environmental protection.

To read the full article, please click on the following link:

<http://www.chinadialogue.net/article/show/single/en/1278>

(Retrieved on 10 September 2007)

Celebrity Idolization Among Singaporean Adolescents

National Technological University of Singapore, Poo Yip Ling, 2006

This research study aims to examine how media consumption may contribute to celebrity idolization among adolescents in Singapore. It also aims to also explore the possible consequences of celebrity idolization, in particular, influence on self-esteem, materialism, and life satisfaction among youths.

A total of 1,114 students from five secondary schools took part in the survey. After excluding non-cases, 621 responses were retained for analysis. The respondents ranged from 11 to 18 years old. Female respondents make up the majority of the surveyed population (68%) as compared to male respondents. Majority were students from the lower secondary level.

About 50.7% of the respondents indicated "music pop singer" as their favourite entertainment celebrity, followed by "music pop bands" (15.5%) and "TV actor/actress" (13.5%). The most popular entertainment celebrity idol is Taiwanese pop singer Jay Chou. Most of the celebrities that respondents idolized were from Taiwan and Singapore, with the exception of Korean singer Rain and American rock band, My Chemical Romance. In terms of the qualities respondents looked up to, 70.2% reported to admire the celebrity's talent, followed by appearance (55.6%) and good character (39.5%). 62.3% of the respondents have adored the celebrity for at least one year.

The study found that media usage is associated with adolescents' parasocial interaction with entertainment celebrities (parasocial interaction is defined in the study as the non-reciprocated, pseudo interaction between the media user and media figure). However only adolescents' attention to celebrity-related media content is significantly associated with their level of parasocial interaction with the celebrities; the time spent using the media is not.

Parasocial interaction is positively associated with celebrity idolization. The adolescents who are attentive to the media content about their favourite celebrities could gradually develop a sense of friendship or intimacy with the celebrities. This one-sided pseudo relationship, which encompasses affective, cognitive and behavioural interaction is likely to increase adolescents' sense of attraction and intimacy toward the celebrities.

Adolescents who possess a higher level of Borderline-Pathological attitudes toward their favourite celebrities are more likely to compare themselves with the celebrities. The degree of adolescents' comparisons with the celebrities appeared to be positively associated with the adolescents' materialistic values but not self-esteem and life satisfaction.

From FANTasy to Reality: The Cosplay Experience
National University of Singapore, Koh Shi Lei, 2006

Performative role-play and games are "world building activities", transforming individual and collective fantasy to reality. This study provides a sociological analysis of the role-playing experience in the context of cosplay fandom in Singapore, substantiated through literature review, focus group discussions and in-depth interviews. "Cosplay" means "costume" and "play", a role playing activity which mainly stems from, the interest in manga (Japanese comics) and anime (Japanese animation), where fans dress up and mimic the personalities and traits of fantasy characters.

Role play and fantasy in Cosplay

A study of the relationship between social processes and youth's cosplay experiences reveals the multiple motivations and meanings cosplayers accrue to their cosplay experiences in a socially constructed space. Youth's involvement in fantasy role-play can be a temporal relief from social constraints, an extension of fantasy, consumption of popular text or even a self-experimental process. Investigating the interest in cosplay reveals how such engagement in leisure activities allows for youth's character

development such as negotiation of self-identity, self-expression and social-learning in the social interactions with others. Through negotiating the boundaries between imagination, fantasy and reality, role-playing also offers youth a high degree of freedom to express the multiple facets of their identity, enjoy different experiences of diverse identities and emotions of the character they impersonate.

Cosplaying in collectivity: The Singapore Cosplay Community

Cosplayers and anime/manga enthusiasts in Singapore form a fan community which occupies both virtual and physical spheres, gathering in private and large conventions at certain times of the year. Annual anime conventions with major cosplay events such as the "End-of-Year Cosplay" event and "Cosfest" are held bi-annually.

Online mailing lists and e-newsletters, chatrooms and forums provide a highly participatory and interactive platform for practical information exchange. Virtual spaces such as Internet Relay Chat (IRC) channels and Internet forums have helped to extend the network of cosplayers, obtain information about the local cosplay community, forthcoming events and relevant websites and resources. As cosplayers congregate at conventions or events which encourage further participation, the Internet becomes a significant link in enhancing members' commitment to cosplay through complementing offline and online social activities and affiliations. For example, cosplayers can take part in online forums and contribute comments about the recently concluded cosplay convention.

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