

How Hong Kong youth perceive parenthood

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The perception of parenthood is shifting among Hong Kong youth. Credit: My

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Young people in Hong Kong are shifting their perceptions of parenthood from traditional Chinese cultural values, which emphasize family relationships and family loyalty, toward global values, such as individualism and consumerism, according to a recent study in the *Pertanika Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities*.

In recent decades, fertility rates have declined almost everywhere in the world. Previous research has shown that the declining birth rate is related to the influence of global values on youth.

To explore how [young people](#) in Hong Kong view marriage and childbearing in the context of global and local influences, Tabitha Ng Yin-ling of Hong Kong Shue Yan University conducted focus group interviews with 40 young people aged 17-25. Her aim was to find out to what extent traditional Chinese values or global values influence how young people see parenthood as well as the challenges that they may encounter in having children.

The study found that while most young people expect to have children, their motivation is more about maintaining the marriage than continuing the family line. Furthermore, some young people may decide not to have children or delay [parenthood](#) due to such factors as personal development, long working hours, lack of money and prolonged continuing education. Most respondents also indicated they would prefer to have two children, unlike the ideal of Chinese culture, which is to have as many children as possible.

However, the participants also tended to disapprove of having children outside a marriage especially if the parents are not mature and

financially capable of protecting them. This may indicate the influence of traditional Chinese values.

Overall, the study found that the decision to have children is not just a personal preference but also a matter of socio-economic factors among the current generation of Hong Kong youth. The study recommends a variety of measures such as tax allowances, maternal/paternal/parental leave and childcare services in order to encourage young people to have children.

More information: Impact of Global and Chinese Cultural Values on Young People's Perceptions of Parenthood in Hong Kong, China.

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