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They are the K-pop stars traversing the world. They’re the creatives crossing over to activism. They’re the most global generation ever, yet also deeply rooted in community; in fact, many regard family members as their heroes.

In our new report “Generation Z: APAC,” we examine the generation coming of age in the world’s fastest-growing region, amid geopolitical shifts and global challenges like climate change. We found that they are largely positive about their futures—with young Chinese most positive, and young Japanese least—and when they don’t like something, they are willing to do something about it.

“They are really questioning the norms and don’t want to be straitjacketed,” Gerda Binder, UNICEF’s Bangkok-based regional gender advisor for East Asia and the Pacific, tells Wunderman Thompson Intelligence.
Hedone Grand Hotel campaign
In this report, we define generation Z as those born between the mid-1990s and the early 2000s. They’re today’s teenagers as well as the young adults now entering the workforce. In the West, gen Zers have been described as the more responsible younger siblings to directionless millennials, or generation Y. In Asia Pacific, a vast area home to 60% of the world’s population, the picture is more nuanced.

Gen Z APAC is shaped by national economies—the maturing of China’s great market experiment, the opening up of Vietnam to the world, Japan’s long economic stagnation. And they’re influenced by culture and religion—in Indonesia, for example, which is adopting a tighter embrace of Islam in private and public life as many other parts of the world are becoming more secular.
Courtesy of Mula Zine
To understand gen Z in Asia, we commissioned a survey of 4,500 consumers aged 13 to 23 from nine markets—China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, the Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand and Vietnam. The survey was conducted between October 10 and October 25, 2019.

Survey questions covered technology and media, online and offline purchases, health and wellness, finances, future hopes, worries, personal heroes, diversity and politics.

Our findings show a confident, socially progressive generation who have adapted to shifting times, who are equally comfortable online and off, and who are rewriting the social mores associated with the multiple issues that are shaping the modern world.

Key findings include:

- 74% say their generation will be better off than their parents’ generation.
- Gen Zers in China are most optimistic (94%) about being better off than their parents, followed by Indonesia (91%), Thailand (88%), Vietnam (84%), the Philippines (78%), Singapore (74%), Hong Kong (71%), Taiwan (60%) and Japan (28%)
76% overall say they use their smartphones multiple times a day. Yet 87% say their peers spend too much time on digital devices. The vast majority—89%—say they think carefully about what they post online.

76% overall say they are as comfortable purchasing online as offline, rising to 88% in China. But 62% overall say they prefer to buy in a physical store.

88% say it’s important to start saving for their future now. 85% say they wish there was more education around financial literacy.

Those in Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, Singapore and Vietnam are most likely to pick family members as personal heroes, mostly followed by teachers. Those in China, Hong Kong and Taiwan are most likely to pick celebrities as personal heroes; and young people in China also hold scientists, entrepreneurs and politicians in high esteem.

Eight out of 10 overall say gender doesn’t define a person as much as it used to.

75% overall say they would date outside their race.

56% say they are trying to eat less meat than in the past.


**New Trend Report: Generation Z: APAC**

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