



The Women's Foundation / YouGov Polls HK Women on the Media Portrayal of Women

- **57% of Women Believe Media Portrays Them Negatively**
- **6 out of 10 Women Have Avoided Doing Something Because of How They Look**
 - **Close to 9 out of 10 think About Their Weight All or Some of the Time**

Hong Kong, June 24, 2015 – The Women's Foundation, one of Hong Kong's leading NGOs dedicated to the advancement of women, recently conducted a representative Hong Kong survey to examine how the portrayal of women in the media affects women and girls' behaviour and self-esteem.

The study found 57% of Hong Kong women believe that the media portrays women negatively, addressing the potential correlation between media exposure, societal perceptions and gender stereotypes.

The poll, conducted by YouGov, a global research and data firm that was recently named one of the world's top 25 by the American Marketing Association, surveyed a representative sample of more than 500 Hong Kong females between the ages of 18 and 30. The survey found that 87% of women think about their weight all or some of the time. 58% of women have avoided a social or school activity because of how they look and 11% of all respondents have skipped school or not participated in class because of their appearance.

Michael Fu, Assistant Manager of Business Development & Client Operations at YouGov, said, "YouGov conducted in-depth research of women across Hong Kong in order to understand how media's portrayal of women and girls can affect their body image, self-identity and potentially lead to eating disorders. The results enforced the importance of combating harmful stereotypes against women and girls. The data clearly shows young girls are now choosing not to participate in classroom discussion because they don't want to draw attention to the way they look. This is among the many issues that The Women's Foundation is committed to tackling and YouGov is proud to help them with this mission."

Su-Mei Thompson, CEO of The Women's Foundation, said, "There is a lack of in-depth research on the scope, impact and effects of media exposure on societal attitudes and behaviours in Hong Kong. This is troubling since we know from our work at the Foundation that gender stereotypes are very prevalent in Hong Kong with potentially harmful consequences. For instance, eating disorders are increasing exponentially in Hong Kong with significant ramifications for our health system. But this isn't surprising when you consider that 30% of the pages of our entertainment magazines comprise slimming advertisements directed at women, underscoring the pressure women feel to live up to often unrealistic ideals¹. Another concern is the sexualisation of women and girls by the media and the findings that boys as young as 11 are accessing sexually explicit material online². This may explain why sex offenders in Hong Kong are getting younger and younger³."

The Women's Foundation is making a one hour, bilingual documentary film "She Objects" (<http://sheobjects.org>) that will examine the scale and impact of media influences in Hong Kong. The film will feature stories from across the generations and interviews with female and male politicians, artists, entertainers, activists and academics. With the documentary, the Foundation aims to advocate a greater sensitivity and responsibility on the part of content producers and providers as well as the media, to inspire a new awareness and approach to the reporting of women's stories without bias, and to encourage media consumers to filter what they see and embrace a set of healthy core values and aspirations. The Foundation will use the documentary to promote media literacy training in secondary schools next year.

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¹ Fung, A. "Gender and Advertising: The Promotional Culture of Whitening and Slimming." *Advertising and Hong Kong Society*. Hong Kong: Chinese UP, 2006. 171-81.

² To, S-M, S. Ngai, and S. Kan. "Direct and Mediating Effects of Accessing Sexually Explicit Online Materials on Hong Kong Adolescents' Attitude, Knowledge, and Behavior Relating to Sex." *Children and Youth Services Review* 34.11 (2012): 2156-163.

³ Evangelical Lutheran Church Social Service of Hong Kong, "Study on the Sex Offences Committed by Youth." 2013.



Notes to Editors:

- 534 respondents completed the survey.
- 38% of the respondents responded that they think about their weight all of the time, and 49% do so some of the time.
- 24% of the respondents have avoided a social or school activity because of how they look, while 34% said not liking how they look may have contributed to their reasons for not attending a social or school activity.

About The Women's Foundation

The Women's Foundation is a non-profit organisation dedicated to improving the lives of women and girls in Hong Kong through ground-breaking research, innovative and impactful community programmes, and education and advocacy. Our three key focus areas are challenging gender stereotypes, increasing the number of women in policy and decision-making roles, and empowering women in poverty to achieve a better quality of life for themselves and their families. For more information, go to www.twfhk.org.

About YouGov

Founded in London in 2000, YouGov is now one of the world's top 25 research companies, with offices throughout the UK, the USA, Europe, the Middle East, Africa and Asia. The heart of YouGov is a global online community, where millions of people and thousands of political, cultural, commercial organisations are engaged in a continuous conversation about their beliefs and behaviours. That conversation gives us an incredibly detailed understanding of people's entire lives: Their attitudes and opinions; their purchase patterns, media consumption and online activities. YouGov combines the stream of data we get from that conversation with our broad research expertise and deep industry experience. From there, we provide a detailed, daily updated portrait of what the world thinks. YouGov's signature research products include: BrandIndex, the daily brand perception tracker; Omnibus, the fastest, most cost effective way to get answers from national samples; and custom research which provides a full spectrum of quantitative and qualitative research to meet our clients' needs. More details can be found on YouGov's Asia Pacific corporate website: <https://ap.yougov.com/>

About Ruder Finn Asia

Founded in 1989, Ruder Finn Asia is the Asia-Pacific subsidiary of New York-based Ruder Finn (www.ruderfinn.com), the leading independent global public relations consulting firm. Growing at an average of 25 percent every year since 2000, Ruder Finn Asia today employs close to 300 consultants in Asia-Pacific and has offices in Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Hong Kong, Singapore, Mumbai, New Delhi and Bangalore. The firm is represented across all other regional markets through a network of high quality affiliates. Ruder Finn Asia's business centres on four strategic pillars: Corporate & Public Trust, Global Connectivity, Health & Wellness and Life+Style. The firm offers expertise in reputation management, digital and social marketing strategy, crisis communication, employee engagement, design and executive skills training. Ruder Finn has dedicated teams for digital strategy, CSR, arts, culture and activation, providing insights and counsel into market trends, including annual research reports including the China Luxury Forecast, Physicians Digital Outlook Survey and other publications. Delivering award-winning innovative, strategic public relations campaigns, Ruder Finn Asia's key clients include Emirates, Jumeirah, Cartier, Volkswagen Group, Sanofi, Daiichi Sankyo, L'Oréal, Omron, Hermès, GSK, Cotton Inc, Bang & Olufsen, Michelin and leading brands from the Kering, LVMH and Richemont Groups.

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