

Abstract

The wide spread use of the mobile phone in Chinese societies, particularly in the most developed regions of Guangdong and Macau, has contributed to the creation of the "Youth Thumb Culture" in Chinese societies. This thesis examines the "Youth Thumb Culture" through identifying the use pattern of mobile phones by young people in two cities, which share the same Cantonese culture and yet enjoy different political systems. The study adopts a qualitative methodology including a general survey and in-depth interviews in the two cities, most of the subjects are university students. The findings reveal some elements in the "Youth Thumb Culture" in the region, such as the use the mobile phone to develop peer relationships, and the distancing relationship with parents in mobile communication circles. No matter what political system is, young people in both cities seldom use the mobile phone to communicate political opinions. And for the Chinese one-child generation, the mobile phone is often regarded as the symbol of themselves. They use the mobile phone to show their unique characters by choosing different ringtons, CRBT and screen pictures. Regarding gender difference in phone use, males are more concerned with functions offered by phones while females tend to focus on appearances. Females prefer SMS more than voice while males are usually opposite.

Keywords: mobile phone use, thumb culture, the fifth medium, one-child generation, Chinese societies.