



# Spending is like voting

## Vote for the world you want

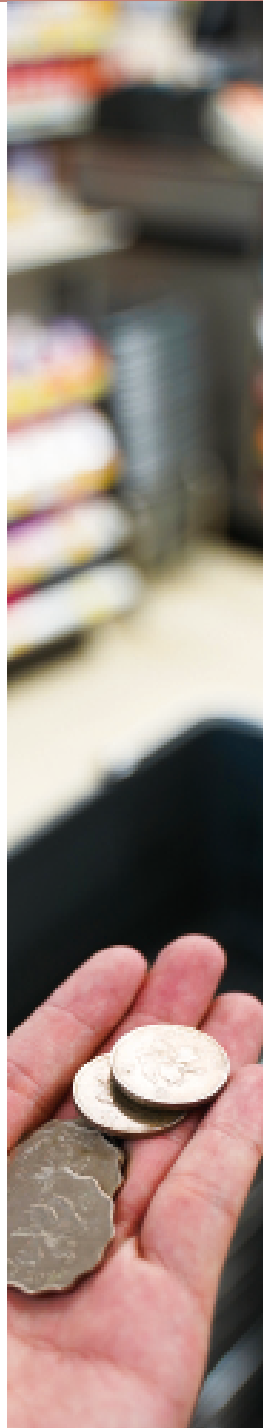
# WHAT IS "CONSUMPTION"?

Generally speaking, it refers to our behavior of purchasing goods or services, and probably, this behavior is based on necessities, life quality improvement, or even fulfillment of personal desires. However, in addition to the above definitions, there is more discussion about different consumption patterns in recent years. People believe that consumption is not only a behavior "satisfying needs", and have begun to think about the impact of its power on society and reflect on the meaning of consumption.

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## Consumption is not only to satisfy one's lust

In recent years, people have mentioned different consumption patterns such as "ethical consumption", "sustainable consumption", and "collaborative consumption" (see the table below). These concepts are not the same, but they have one thing in common: from focusing on the consumption pattern of "individuals" to that of the "society". It is believed that buying goods or services does not simply satisfy people's needs and desires, but act as a medium for them to find or think about the meaning of life. Consumers can reflect their wishes and preferences to producers through the market, thereby changing producers' production systems and sales strategies, and ultimately building a better society.



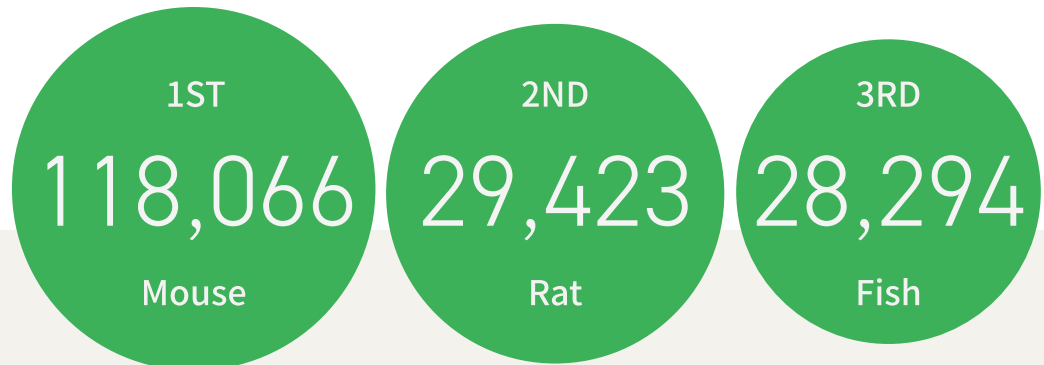
# Different Consumption Patterns

	<b>Ethical Consumption</b>	<b>Sustainable Consumption</b>	<b>Collaborative Consumption</b>
<b>Origin</b>	Also known as “Responsible Consumption” or “Just Consumption”, suggested by Ethical Consumer in 1989	The concept started in 1970s and was proposed to the United Nations in the report Our Common Future by the World Commission on Environment and Development in 1987	Also called “Sharing Economy Consumption”, suggested by American scholars Marcus Felson and Joe Spaeth in 1978
<b>Highlights</b>	Consider ethical responsibility as the basic rule during consumption, so as not to exploit nor damage humans, animals and environment, for the benefit of the disadvantaged groups, the society and the world	In addition to satisfying individual needs and increasing living standard, one has to minimise the use of natural resources and toxic materials, as well as reduce wastes and pollutants during production and consumption processes	Fully utilise the resources by sharing idle items or skills, maximise the value of the resources, and let the sharers get what they want
<b>Social Impact and Meanin</b>	Contend against the idea of profit maximisation of Capitalism	Keep balance among the environment, ecosystem, society and economy	Build up trust by “sharing” instead of “possessing”
<b>Examples</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Fair Trade Products</li> <li>○ Cruelty-free Products</li> <li>○ Non-animal tested cosmetics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) Certified Paper</li> <li>○ Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) Certified Seafood</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Airbnb</li> <li>○ Uber</li> <li>○ Co-working space</li> </ul>

## Ethical Consumption

Sometimes we may not be aware of the harm inflicted on animals during the manufacturing process. For example, animal tests for some products (such as cosmetics) are common in Hong Kong.

### Numbers of animals used in experiments in Hong Kong

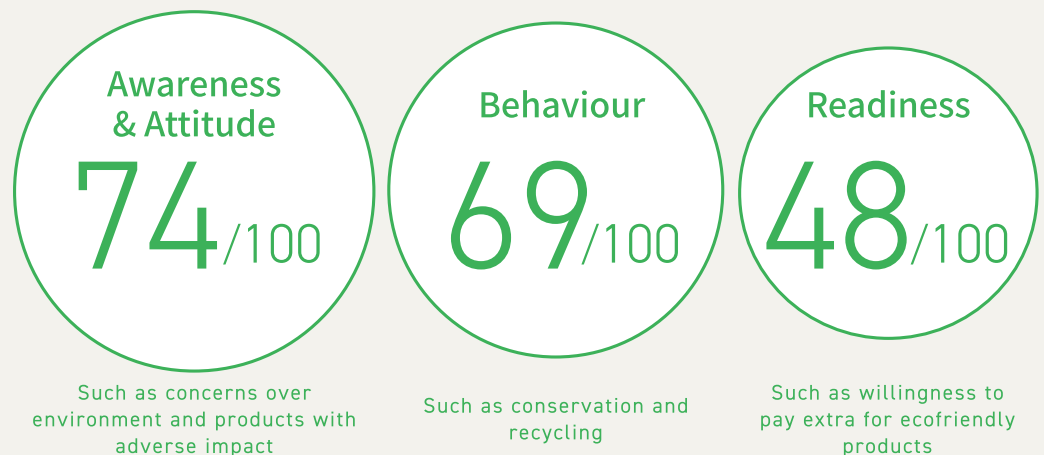


Reference: the 2016 data cited by the Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, in the Legislative Council on 21 March 2018

## Sustainable Consumption

A study found Hong Kong people have a high level of awareness but a low level of willingness of sustainable consumption. In other words, they concern about related topics such as energy conservation and waste sorting/separation, but are not willing to take action.

### Sustainable Consumption Index



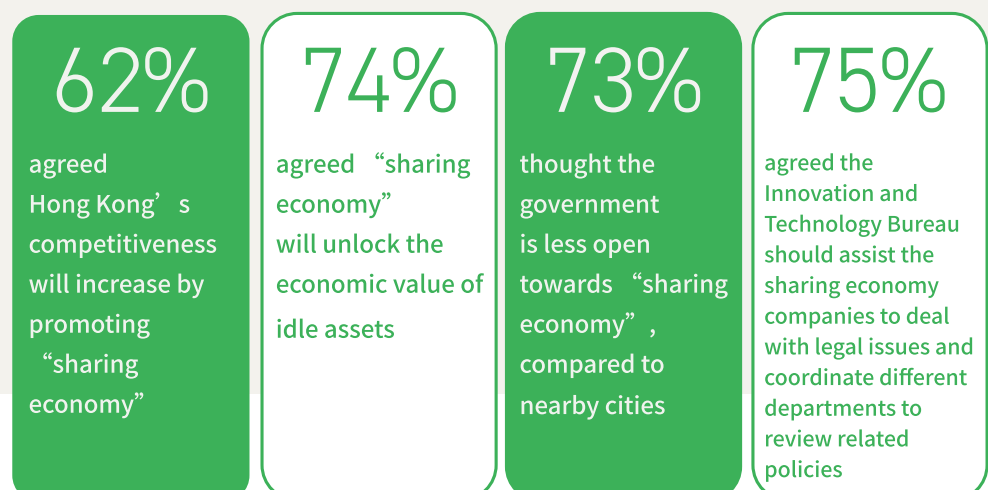
Reference: Sustainable Consumption for a Better Future – A Study on Consumer Behaviour and Business Reporting by Consumer Council in February 2016

## Collaborative Consumption

A survey found most people agree there are advantages of sharing economy but think the government is not quite open towards it.

### Survey on Sharing Economy

Reference: Survey on Innovative Technology and Sharing Economy by Public Opinion Programme, the University of Hong Kong in September 2017



## Bringing about social change through consumption

You may wonder the power of consumption alone on the producers and the development of society. Indeed, there are examples in history of bringing about changes and even balancing the government by the power of consumption. The most famous one is the Non-cooperation Movement launched by Mahatma Gandhi in the Indian independence movement, aiming at protesting against the colonial government's monopoly on salt production. Gandhi led his followers to produce salt. The Non-cooperation Movement successfully put pressure on the colonial government and drew global attention. Martin Luther King Jr, leader of the American civil rights movement, initiated the black citizens to boycott public transportation as a way to challenge the racial segregation measures. One year later, he successfully forced the city government to abolish the policy.

For persons we interviewed in the cover stories, Wah-kee not only regards his store as a small business in Ping Shek Estate, but also as a neighborhood with human touch, fully trusted by residents in the Estate. In "The White House", Javis uses tea as a tool to let the guests experience tranquility and take good care of their soul. The shopkeeper of the social enterprise MentalCare cares about communities in need in this society while doing business, and provides equal employment opportunities for all. These three stories tell us that in addition to monetary rewards and materialism, social value and meaning also matters in the process of sales and purchase.

## Using consumption to support your agreed values

Whether it is ethical consumption, sustainable consumption, or collaborative consumption, it is a consumption choice with values. Consumers can purchase goods or services that conform to their values. They can also adopt a boycotting approach to refuse to purchase any items from those companies that violate their values. American writer and educator Anna Lappé once said,

"Every time you spend a penny, you are voting for the world you want." And how would you vote for it?



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