

RESEARCH ARTICLE

# The Rise of the Lie-Flat Movement in Hong Kong: Challenging Societal Norms and Redefining Notions of Success

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## Abstract

The “Lie-Flat movement” is a growing trend in China that promotes minimalism, leisure, and well-being as priorities over career-focused success. The article cautions the disillusioned young population of Hong Kong about the unmanageable expenses of living and the restricted upward social movement. Since 1980, the presence of inequality and limited intergenerational mobility has hindered upward mobility.

Initial followers propagated the rejection of materialism through online platforms, emphasizing the importance of maintaining a healthy balance between work and personal life, and finding satisfaction from within. It promotes prioritizing experiences over material possessions, thereby decreasing consumerism. Public housing and welfare programs facilitate the way of life, but increasing expenses instill uncertainty in the government among the middle-class.

**Keywords:** Lie-Flat Movement, Work-life balance, Minimalism, Upward mobility, Government assistance.

## 1. Introduction

In the current era characterized by intense competition and a constant drive for success, there is an intriguing transformation occurring in societal norms. A growing number of persons are adopting an alternative lifestyle, sometimes referred to as the ‘Lie-Flat Movement’ (Tan, 2022). This emerging movement, originating in China, advocates for a minimalist way of life, courageously questioning the prevailing cultural values of consumerism and conventional definitions of success (Chan & Tang, 2019; Zhou, 2022). This phenomena is increasingly gaining speed and is not only changing cultural views and work-life attitudes, but also challenging conventional economic frameworks and government tactics.

The tendency known as “lying flat,” or “tangping” in Chinese, has arisen as a means of resistance among Chinese youth to combat the demanding work culture and excessive societal expectations (Jennings & He, 2023). This movement entails a deliberate renunciation of the conventional pursuit of wealth, marriage,

and consumption, and instead adopts a minimalist, simplified attitude to life (Mei, 2021; Brossard, 2023). The metaphor of chives (jiucai) prostrating themselves on the ground to evade harvesting has emerged as a potent emblem of this mindset, signifying the yearning to elude societal norms and exploitation (Chan & Tang, 2019; Brossard, 2023). This shift in thinking not only confronts the traditional cultural norms but also prompts essential inquiries regarding the concept of success and the genuine significance of fulfillment.

The lying flat movement emerged as a direct reaction to the widespread “996” work culture prevalent in China’s tech industry, which entails working from 9 am to 9 pm, six days a week. It also serves as a response to the societal expectations of pursuing material wealth and adhering to conventional measures of success. The statement highlights the increasing dissatisfaction of young people in China with traditional measures of achievement and their refusal to engage in a system they view as exploitative and fundamentally unjust (Li et al., 2023; McGregor, 2022).

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The Chinese government has conveyed substantial apprehension regarding the emergence of the lying flat movement, perceiving it as a plausible menace to both economic progress and social equilibrium (Bandurski, 2021; Li et al., 2023; McGregor, 2022). President Xi Jinping has consistently encouraged the general population to actively engage in society and embrace upward social advancement, underscoring the significance of generating possibilities for individuals to amass riches (Stenslie & Galtung, 2023). Nevertheless, the increasing prevalence of the lying flat trend indicates a widening gap between the ambitions of Chinese young people and the government's goal for the nation's progress (Bandurski, 2021).

In addition, the lying flat phenomena has been likened to the "quiet quitting" trend seen in the United States, where employees are refusing to exceed their job responsibilities and instead focusing on achieving a healthy work-life balance (Fong, 2017; Campton et al., 2023). Both movements exemplify a worldwide change in work-related perspectives and a longing for increased independence and satisfaction among younger cohorts. The socio-economic consequences of the movement in Hong Kong are being analyzed, together with parallels to worldwide patterns, in order to comprehend its influence on consumer behavior and public policy (Lee & Chan, 2008; Hui, 2015).

The main purpose of this essay is to examine the complexities of the Lie-Flat Movement, specifically its socio-economic consequences, particularly in the context of Hong Kong. Moreover, it aims to compare this movement with comparable worldwide patterns, examining the fundamental causes that drive its growth and analyzing the views towards social advancement and government backing. The analysis also encompasses an examination of the movement's impact on consumer behavior and policies pertaining to public housing.

This work has been carefully organized into multiple sections, beginning with an academic summary of the Lie-Flat Movement. Subsequently, the discussion will explore a detailed examination of the socio-economic trend in Hong Kong, comparing it to similar global trends. The discussion will conclude by combining the main results and their consequences.

## 2. Emergence of the Movement in Hong Kong

The Lie-Flat movement has emerged in Hong Kong as a response to the economic challenges experienced

by the younger population. The dissatisfaction arising from limited social mobility and rapidly increasing living expenses, especially housing costs, has contributed to the disillusionment that is leading individuals to disengage from conventional measures of success (Zhang, 2022; Liu et al., 2023; Jayantha & Man, 2013). According to Liu et al. (2023), there was a lack of progress in relative income mobility after 1980, which resulted in consecutive cohorts being in poverty despite making advancements in their careers. This situation worsened the feeling of being financially trapped, as noted by Zhang (2022). The low availability of cheap housing in Hong Kong has led to reduced opportunities for young Hong Kongers, where steady professions and living were once feasible (Lee, 2016).

These circumstances have created a favorable environment for the Lie-Flat worldview, which rejects the established societal norms. Early adopters led the way in sharing personal stories of their journeys, rejecting materialism, and placing a high value on achieving a balance between work and personal life through online platforms (Cheng, 2016; Gong & Liu, 2022). Survey data indicates that 20% of young people in the area now align themselves with Lie-Flat ideas, highlighting a widespread sense of disappointment with the current economic situation among this group (Lam, 2015; Zheng et al., 2023).

The movement's expansion into both virtual and physical domains has significant consequences for transforming deeply ingrained societal norms and behaviors (Hue, 2007). In addition to analyzing economic policy, the Lie-Flat phenomena is closely linked to the wider development of local activity. The growth of civic identity and the promotion of self-determination have influenced people's openness to groups that advocate breaking away from established standards (Hue, 2008; Lu et al., 2019).

The interconnections between social and political factors provide additional backdrop for the development of Lie-Flatism in Hong Kong, particularly in relation to national identity, localism positions, and contentious relations between different parties. For example, intense arguments about legislative independence and the perceived erosion of liberties have led to a strong sense of self-identification as "Hongkonger," apart from mainland identity (Lee, 2019). The dynamic environment influences the perception of alternative lifestyles that promote more flexible interpretations of success and fulfillment.

Researchers seek to gain a more profound comprehension of the consequences of Lie-Flatism by investigating its specific effects on societal norms and individual welfare. Although still in its early stages, the strong connection with young people in the community who are experiencing economic obstacles suggests that it has the potential to have long-lasting effects on redefining ideas about success and wealth. Continued examination of the expansion, socio-cultural aspects, and political implications of the movement is essential for a complete understanding of its significance and effects.

Further examination also uncovers intracultural subtleties within the movement. Qualitative research have revealed a wide range of opinions among devotees, including from complete withdrawal from mainstream culture to partial acceptance of minimalism without fully accepting the concept of “lying flat” (Zhang, 2019). Some individuals adhere to a varying range of conservative and radical interpretations of the philosophy, depending on their life stages and circumstances (Cui, 2018). The intricate structure of the movement highlights the need for comprehensive research to accurately portray its diverse characteristics.

As the phenomena continues to spread, both online and offline, further research has explored its ability to foster communities and modify social support networks. Online forums and meet-up communities have enabled individuals to form connections based on similar ideals, while also reducing the subjective pressures that have been intensified by the pandemic (Chan, 2020; Fung, 2021). The movement’s interconnection reflects its profound ramifications as a grassroots process of redefining fulfillment beyond financial or career-oriented concerns.

Continuous scrutiny is essential because to the rise of Lie-Flatism, which serves as a lens that reflects wider socioeconomic changes and local political currents. The trajectory of this phenomenon indicates that it could serve as an important indicator for critical policy matters such as social mobility, employment insecurity, housing availability, and civic engagement, which warrant continuous analytical scrutiny. Researchers and policymakers must rely on sophisticated, evidence-based investigation to fully understand the relevance and nuances of the issue in order to develop suitable and targeted solutions.

### 3. Literature Review

#### 3.1 An Introduction to the Lie-Flat Phenomenon

Recent research has provided important insights into the trends and perceptions surrounding upward mobility in Hong Kong. Liu et al. (2023) examined earnings mobility in Hong Kong using census data spanning several decades. They found that relative income upward mobility slowed considerably for those born between 1976 and 1980, and the trend continued for subsequent cohorts. The 1976-1980 cohort marked a watershed, with robust upward mobility before this period but significantly subdued mobility afterward. Later cohorts started off with a much lower percentage in the well-off group and a higher percentage in the poor group, meaning that even with apparent upward mobility, many remained stuck in poverty.

Emerging from China, the Lie-Flat Movement presents a fresh perspective that challenges traditional notions of success and consumption (Zhang & Li, 2023; Zheng et al., 2023). This movement encourages a minimalist lifestyle, where individuals reject the incessant pursuit of material wealth to focus on personal well-being, leisure, and self-fulfillment (Gong & Liu, 2022; Su, 2023). According to the BBC News (2022), the Lie-Flat Movement in China represents a growing trend among young individuals who are rejecting the intense work culture and societal pressure to achieve wealth and status (Bandurski, 2021). Proponents of this movement seek a slower-paced life focused on personal fulfillment rather than constantly working long hours.

The Lie-Flat Movement reflects a rejection of the Chinese government’s emphasis on economic growth and social mobility, as adherents prioritize work-life balance, leisure time, and personal well-being over constantly striving for wealth and status (Lin & Gullotta, 2021). This trend suggests a growing disconnect between the aspirations of young Chinese and the government’s vision for the country.

The interplay between perceptions and realities of social mobility is crucial for policymakers in Hong Kong. The popularity of the Lie-Flat Movement in China suggests that a growing segment of the population in Hong Kong may also be questioning the value of continuous striving for upward mobility and its associated trade-offs (Hsiao et al., 2020). Addressing these perceptions requires a nuanced understanding of the factors shaping upward mobility and the role of government assistance in Hong Kong.

As economic and social landscapes evolve, it is incumbent upon policymakers and researchers in Hong Kong to stay attuned to the shifting perceptions and realities of social mobility. Only then can they devise effective strategies to support individuals in their pursuit of upward mobility and foster a more inclusive and prosperous society.

### 3.2 Driving Forces Behind the Lie-Flat Movement

The rise of the “lying flat” or “tangping” movement in China is a complex phenomenon that has emerged as a response to the country’s intense work culture and societal pressures. According to the Bloomberg article, the movement took off after a viral post on the Baidu Tieba social media platform in April 2021, where the author expressed their decision to not work for two years, rejecting the need to constantly climb the ladder and conform to the values of older generations (Bloomberg News, 2022).

The proliferation of the Lie-Flat Movement can be attributed to several factors. A critical factor is the growing disillusionment with the conventional path to success, typically characterized by long working hours, elevated stress levels, and limited personal time. The societal pressure to continually strive for more has been questioned by many, who found it leading to burnout and dissatisfaction.

Economic factors significantly contribute to this movement’s momentum. The rising income inequality, escalating housing costs, and limited social mobility have instilled a sense of despair and frustration among the population (Berlaffa, 2023). The Lie-Flat Movement, thus, provides an alternative lifestyle that challenges the belief that material wealth and social status define success.

Furthermore, the advent of technology and the opportunities for remote work have given individuals the flexibility to adopt a Lie-Flat lifestyle (Raab, 2023). The ability to earn online and work from anywhere has empowered many to prioritize personal fulfillment and leisure over traditional career paths.

As described in the article, the “lying flat” movement represents a conscious decision by young Chinese individuals to opt out of the competitive rat race for material success (Wang et al., 2024). This trend is seen as a reaction to the “996” work culture prevalent in China’s tech industry, where employees are expected to work from 9am to 9pm, six days a week. Many young Chinese feel disillusioned by this exploitative work culture and the societal pressure to achieve traditional markers of success, such as wealth and status (Bloomberg News, 2022).

The research paper by Jin (2023) further explores the psychological underpinnings of the “lying flat” phenomenon through the lens of Mindsponge Theory. The paper suggests that economic factors, such as surging unemployment rates and declining confidence in the economy, have played a significant role in influencing this trend. The Mindsponge Theory explains how individuals process information and make decisions based on perceived benefits and costs (Vuong, 2023), which in the case of “lying flat” adherents, have led them to prioritize personal well-being, leisure, and self-fulfillment over the relentless pursuit of material wealth and social status (Jin, 2023).

In essence, the Lie-Flat Movement can be seen as a rejection of the Chinese government’s emphasis on economic growth and social mobility, with young people instead prioritizing work-life balance, leisure time, and personal development (Bandurski, 2021). This trend has been met with concern from the government, which views it as a potential threat to economic progress. However, the growing popularity of the “lying flat” movement suggests a significant shift in the aspirations and values of young Chinese, who are seeking a more balanced and fulfilling way of life.

### 3.3 Upward Mobility and Government Assistance: Perspectives and Perceptions

The choice to “lie down” in Hong Kong is a result of intricate interplays between desires for upward social movement and perceptions of obstacles or deficiencies in support structures. Although migrant populations require economic activity and upward mobility, they encounter both opportunities and obstacles within the systems of the host society.

The upward mobility of Chinese migrants in Hong Kong’s employment is driven by their pursuit and necessity to engage in economic activities (Cheung & Leung, 2012). The significance of Chinese language proficiency in Hong Kong’s education and job sectors is underscored as a crucial element for the upward mobility of lower socioeconomic groups (Shum et al., 2019). Nevertheless, the difficulties arising from the influence of Chinese evaluations on young people from ethnic minority backgrounds underscore the intricate nature of the education system, which hinders social advancement for certain individuals (Loh & Tam, 2016).

Perceptions of mobility are additionally shaped by socioeconomic inequalities and geographical variations, as observed in other countries (Du et al.,

2021; Chaniebate et al., 2023). In Hong Kong, the presence of economic progress is accompanied by inequality, which shapes the perception of mobility. Du et al. (2021) attribute the hindrance of aspirations in a sector to policies and cultural norms.

Government help and welfare programs have a significant influence on shaping behavior, as may be observed at the local level. The rise in dependence on public assistance and the increased vulnerability of families after the financial crisis has led to heightened levels of employment insecurity, which in turn has fostered a sense of strain. This pressure has resulted in individuals resorting to coping mechanisms such as adopting a passive response. Furthermore, the psychological anguish experienced by communities during crises emphasizes the significance of accessible safeguards and support for mental and emotional well-being (Chung et al., 2022). The lack of sufficient support for refugees highlights the deficiencies in addressing the crucial and psychological well-being requirements of vulnerable populations (Siah et al., 2020).

The increasing prevalence of the belief in the limited opportunities for social advancement reflects a reassessment of the compromises associated with upward mobility and a feeling that policies aimed at addressing the needs of different demographic groups lack adequate complexity (Lee, 2016). To overcome the gap between goals and obstacles, it is necessary to understand the factors that enable movement as well as the impact of specific government actions. An inclusive and supportive atmosphere can only be created by detailed and comprehensive assessments that consider multiple factors, such as economic, social, and mental health issues. This requires well-designed programs.

### 3.4 A Global Lens and Comparative Examination of Similar Movements

The Lie-Flat Movement isn't confined to China or Hong Kong; similar movements are taking root in different parts of the world. A comparative study of these global movements can offer valuable insights into their driving forces, societal changes, and governmental reactions.

For instance, movements promoting work-life balance and denouncing the pressure of constant productivity have gained ground in countries like Japan, South Korea, and the United States (Jeong, 2021; Jennings & He, 2023). These movements echo the themes of the Lie-Flat Movement, emphasizing personal well-

being, leisure, and the rejection of societal norms.

Comparative analysis can deepen our understanding of the cultural, economic, and social factors shaping these movements. It can also help identify shared challenges and potential solutions, informing policies and interventions to cater to the changing needs and aspirations of individuals opting for alternative lifestyles.

In conclusion, this literature analysis has provided an extensive overview of the Lie-Flat Movement, delved into the factors contributing to its emergence, scrutinized perceptions towards upward mobility and government assistance, and underscored the importance of a global view and comparative analysis with similar movements. By examining existing research and scholarly articles, we've set the stage for the ensuing sections of the paper, which will focus on a socio-economic examination of the Lie-Flat Movement in Hong Kong and a broader comparative study with global trends. The following section will further probe into the socio-economic consequences of the Lie-Flat Movement in Hong Kong, exploring its impact on consumer behavior, public housing, and sentiments towards government assistance.

## 4. Socio-Economic Analysis of the Lie-Flat Movement in Hong Kong

### 4.1 The Diminishing Embrace of Consumerism

The Lie-Flat Movement in Hong Kong has seen a notable reduction in consumerist tendencies amongst its growing base of supporters. This ideological evolution directly challenges traditional societal definitions linking success and affluence to conspicuous consumption (Zhang and Li, 2023). As the researchers explain, Lie-Flat adherents are making deliberate choices to lessen their reliance on possessions and instead adopt a simpler lifestyle.

The underpinnings of changing consumer behaviors can be traced to an array of interrelated factors. Firstly, there is a rising disillusionment with the relentless pursuit of wealth as a sole measure of fulfillment and status. Long-entrenched norms defining achievement through accumulation are being questioned (Charm & Lin, 2023).

Additionally, Lie-Flat supporters express a heartfelt yearning for lives with more intrinsic meaning beyond material acquisition (Zheng et al., 2020). By prioritizing experiences and relationships over belongings, they pursue existence with richer subjective value and joy.

The ever-accelerating work environment in dynamic cities like Hong Kong also contributes to burnout and a desire for work-life balance (Summers, 2021). Reduced spending allows reclaiming leisure time independent of economic output.

By reconsidering embedded concepts like consumerism, the Lie-Flat Movement highlights the need for policies and businesses to respect individuals' evolving priorities centered around well-being, community and sustainability rather than unchecked consumption.

#### 4.2 The Impact of Public Housing and Welfare

The Lie-Flat Movement's rise in Hong Kong is notably influenced by the implementation of public housing and the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) initiative (SCMP, 2022). The presence of these social welfare programs has been instrumental in facilitating and maintaining the Lie-Flat way of life among the inhabitants of the city.

The provision of reasonably priced public accommodation in Hong Kong is a fundamental element that supports the Lie-Flat Movement. The provision of subsidized housing through the public housing system enables individuals to attain substantial cost savings on their daily living expenses. Consequently, this liberates monetary assets that may be allocated to alternative endeavors in life, including the pursuit of personal passions, the investigation of alternative professional trajectories, or a mere respite from the ceaseless quest for affluence and social standing (Zheng et al., 2023).

In conjunction with public accommodations, the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) program significantly contributes to the promotion and implementation of the Lie-Flat lifestyle. The CSSA program ensures that low-income individuals and families have access to essentials and a minimum standard of living by providing a vital financial safety net (SCMP, 2022). This monetary assistance empowers individuals who would otherwise be incapable of meeting their fundamental living expenses to adopt the Lie-Flat philosophy, thereby diminishing their dependence on conventional career-oriented trajectories and granting them the resources to investigate alternative lifestyles (Yang et al., 2020).

The presence of these social welfare initiatives in Hong Kong has created a conducive atmosphere that supports and sustains the Lie-Flat Movement. The establishment of a supportive environment for the Lie-Flat lifestyle has been facilitated by the public

housing system and the CSSA program, which offer housing and financial security (Yip et al., 2020). This enables individuals to abandon the demands of the conventional career ladder and adopt a more comprehensive outlook on life.

The interdependent association between the Lie-Flat Movement and these social welfare programs underscores the pivotal significance that social support systems and government policies can place on the formation of societal trends and individual decisions. With the ongoing rise of the Lie-Flat Movement, it is imperative to comprehend the influence of public housing and welfare on its evolution in order to assess the wider societal ramifications and possible policy reactions.

#### 4.3 Perception of Governmental Aid Among the Middle Class

The Lie-Flat Movement has sparked a discourse within the middle class of Hong Kong concerning the extent of assistance they are granted by the government. This demographic, which has historically been perceived as independent and less reliant on social support (Van Wijk, 2014), has become an influential faction within the larger Lie-Flat Movement.

Gong and Liu (2022) assert that individuals who choose the "lie flat" way of life frequently express discontent regarding what they perceive to be the government's lack of concern for the middle class. The individuals convey sentiments of insufficiency regarding the assistance rendered and argue that the government ought to heighten its endeavors to address their requirements.

This sentiment embodies a more profound apprehension regarding the unequal distribution of income and the lack of upward social mobility in Hong Kong (Bengtsson & Waldenström, 2018). With the growing support for the Lie-Flat Movement, there is increased scrutiny from the middle class regarding the fairness of government policies and their effects on different social strata.

The middle class, which has historically been regarded as the foundation of Hong Kong's economic success (Lui, 2003), has been expected to sustain its standard of living through self-sufficiency and diligent effort. Nevertheless, this demographic is increasingly uneasy due to the Lie-Flat Movement, as they contend with the difficulties of escalating living expenses, stagnant wages, and inadequate social support.

Through vocalizing their discontent regarding the perceived insufficiency of government assistance,

the middle class is contesting the dominant discourse that posits them as independent individuals not necessitating the same degree of assistance as lower-income cohorts (Liu, 2021). This change in viewpoint underscores the necessity for policymakers to reassess the existing support systems and guarantee that the middle class is not disregarded or abandoned in the quest for economic stability and societal welfare.

The participation of the middle class in the Lie-Flat Movement is a poignant illustration that the pursuit of a more inclusive and equitable society transcends social class distinctions. In the midst of this intricate social movement, it will be imperative for the government to reassess the allocation of resources and support and resolve the concerns of the middle class. Doing so will contribute significantly to the development of a more unified and resilient Hong Kong community.

#### 4.4 An Examination of Case Studies and Instances

In order to acquire a more comprehensive comprehension of the socio-economic consequences of the Lie-Flat Movement in Hong Kong, it is advantageous to examine a range of case studies and real-life illustrations that shed light on the intricacies and subtleties of this phenomenon.

An exemplary investigation into the Lie-Flat milieu among Chinese youth during the COVID-19 pandemic was undertaken by Su (2023). Su's research offers significant insights into the experiences and motivations of individuals who have adopted this alternative way of life. Through an examination of the personal narratives and lived experiences of individuals who have opted to "lie flat," Su's research illuminates the multifaceted elements that have influenced the embrace of the Lie-Flat ethos. These elements encompass discontentment with conventional career trajectories, an aspiration for improved work-life equilibrium, and an exploration of more gratifying and significant endeavors.

In addition, Lin and Gullotta (2021) provide an additional viewpoint that complements the aforementioned regarding the wider societal ramifications of the Lie-Flat Movement. The analysis conducted delves into the manners in which young individuals in China are actively pursuing unorthodox life trajectories and rejecting conventional notions of achievement. Through a comprehensive analysis of case studies involving individuals who have opted for non-traditional career paths, artistic pursuits, self-directed learning, or entrepreneurship, Lin and

Gullotta offer a nuanced comprehension of the Lie-Flat Movement's influence on personal autonomy, social mobility, and the changing definitions of success and fulfillment.

These exhaustive analyses and illustrations provide a multifaceted perspective on the impact of the Lie-Flat Movement on both individuals and Hong Kong's broader society. Through an exploration of the personal narratives and lived experiences of individuals who have adopted this alternative way of life, scholars have uncovered the intricate network of socio-economic, cultural, and psychological elements that have contributed to the Lie-Flat Movement's ascent.

## 5. Comparative Analysis with Global Lie-Flat-Like Movements

### 5.1 Exploring Similar Movements Across the Globe

The rise of the Lie-Flat Movement in China sparked worldwide interest in similar trends challenging conventional definitions of success and norms centered around materialism. A wave of curiosity emerged around these emerging movements that similarly embrace minimalist lifestyles.

In Japan, a comparable phenomenon called "hikikomori" represents individuals who have opted to withdraw from society by leading reclusive home-based lives (Kato et al., 2019). This contrasts Western movements like "downshifting" or "voluntary simplicity" which more directly align with Lie-Flat ideals through empowering individuals to simplify living situations and prioritize leisure over consumption (Hook et al., 2023; Nuga et al., 2023).

The United States saw the ascent of the "goblin mode" trend on social media platforms gaining popularity in early 2022. As defined by Callahan (2022), goblin mode humorously depicts indulging primal instincts and abandoning performative concerns for image when alone. Referencing perceiving oneself and behaving "like a goblin", it underscored desires to avoid unattainable beauty and productivity standards exacerbated during the pandemic. Figures like Elon Musk tweeted in support of goblin mode, rapidly mainstreaming it online to opt out of intensifying societal duties and expectations.

Comparative examination across these diverse yet interconnected movements fosters deeper cross-cultural learning. While distinctive attributes and root causes vary between nations, shared underpinnings

challenging social norms, materialism and work-oriented mentalities signal broader societal evolutions deserving investigation. These global trends fuel curiosity surrounding the Lie-Flat Movement's implications by questioning standardized concepts of achievement, consumption and well-being universally.

## 5.2 Principal Drivers and Influencing Factors

The Lie-Flat Movement, although possessing certain commonalities among societies, is subject to the impact of an intricate network of socioeconomic, cultural, and generational elements that differ in significance and expression within distinct contexts.

The Lie-Flat Movement in China is frequently interpreted as a response to the substantial socioeconomic pressures that have influenced the youth demographic's way of life (Weide & Narayan, 2021). The escalating cost of housing, the demanding work environment that emphasizes extended hours and exceptional output, and the limited prospects for upward social mobility have collectively contributed to an expanding sentiment of disillusionment and a yearning for a more harmonious and gratifying lifestyle (Zhang & Li, 2023).

In China, the Lie-Flat lifestyle can be interpreted as a form of resistance against the pressure to conform to societal expectations and the unrelenting pursuit of material success (Su, 2023). The adoption of the "lie flat" lifestyle signifies a departure from the conventional career-driven trajectory and a pursuance of alternative methods of attaining personal fulfillment, such as engaging in creative endeavors, starting a business, or placing personal welfare above professional progression.

Analogous trends may be discerned in Japan, where the hikikomori phenomenon, which manifests as a severe withdrawal from social interactions among young people, has arisen as a reaction to the formidable academic demands, restricted job opportunities, and inflexible societal norms that have characterized the younger cohorts' lives thus far (Kato et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2022). In numerous ways, the hikikomori symbolize a departure from the conventional route and a quest for a more introspective and self-reflective way of life.

The downshifting movement, which is frequently observed in Western regions, is motivated by an aspiration for a more straightforward and purposeful way of life that challenges the prevailing consumerist ideology (Aidar & Daniels, 2024). Embracing

downshifting may lead to a greater emphasis on work-life balance, environmental sustainability, and the development of a more introspective and gratifying lifestyle, as opposed to the pursuit of material affluence and social standing alone.

The diversity of these influencing and driving factors highlights the importance of developing a nuanced comprehension of the Lie-Flat Movement, given that its expressions and fundamental motivations may vary substantially across economic, cultural, and generational boundaries. Through an acknowledgment of the distinct socio-cultural circumstances that influence the Lie-Flat ethos across various societies, policymakers, employers, and the general public can formulate more efficacious and customized strategies to tackle the obstacles and ambitions of individuals who have adopted this unconventional way of life.

## 5.3 Societal Changes and Government impact

The rise and spread of Lie-Flat-like movements are intrinsically linked with societal transformations and outlooks. These movements challenge the dominant societal norms and values, questioning the traditional definition of success and the relentless pursuit of material wealth (Zhang & Liu, 2023). They mirror a growing dissatisfaction with the incessant pressure to achieve more while recognizing the significance of well-being and a balanced life.

The Lie-Flat Movement, along with its global counterparts, signifies a shift in societal priorities, prioritizing the quest for happiness and personal fulfillment over material accumulation (Zhou, 2023). By studying these societal transformations and outlooks, we can derive valuable insights into the underlying motivations and social dynamics of Lie-Flat-like movements.

The influence of government backing and welfare programs is crucial in determining the long-term viability and influence of initiatives like to Lie-Flat (Bandurski, 2021). In nations such as China and Japan, where these movements have garnered significant traction, there is an ongoing discussion on the sufficiency of government assistance for middle-class individuals and the establishment of social safety nets (Gong et al., 2023; Ivory, 2023).

The popularity of these movements has increased due to the sense of insufficient government support, prompting individuals to seek alternative lifestyles (Wai, 2022; Yokoyama, 2023). The government's response to these movements is diverse, encompassing attempts to tackle the underlying causes as well as disregarding them as transient fads.



## 6. Discussion

### 6.1 Discoveries and Examination

A comprehensive analysis of the Lie-Flat Movement has resulted in a number of significant findings that shed light on its extensive socioeconomic implications. The movement's advocates' dramatic decline in consumeristic tendencies is arguably the most remarkable observation. The aforementioned transition is predominantly attributable to the complete abandonment of materialistic ideals and the wholehearted adoption of a minimalist lifestyle. Individuals who have opted to "lie flat" presently prioritize experiences, inner contentment, and personal fulfillment over the ceaseless pursuit of material prosperity and status symbols.

Additionally, the analysis has unveiled that the public housing and welfare systems in operation in Hong Kong have significantly influenced and facilitated the Lie-Flat Movement. In conjunction with an extensive social security system, the availability of affordable housing options has furnished individuals with an indispensable safety net. The provision of this supportive framework has enabled them to investigate alternative lifestyles without perpetually worrying about financial destitution. The infrastructure that has been supplied by the government has played a crucial role in fostering the expansion of the Lie-Flat Movement and influencing the perspectives of its advocates regarding government support.

### 6.2 Consequences and Significance

The implications of the Lie-Flat Movement are extensive, as it profoundly challenges prevailing work-life attitudes and established societal norms. Through the intentional embrace of a minimalist way of life, individuals are actively reassessing their priorities and questioning the dominant economic structures that have historically served as the impetus for both societal advancement and individual prosperity.

This social movement not only critically examines the intrinsic worth of excessive consumption, but also emphasizes the urgent requirement for a more equitable, environmentally conscious, and comprehensive strategy towards individual and collective welfare. The Lie-Flat ethos functions as a powerful reminder that progress should not be exclusively gauged by the acquisition of material prosperity and economic expansion. Instead, it ought to be complemented by an authentic regard for the holistic satisfaction and standard of living that individuals encounter.

Moreover, significant debates have been sparked by the Lie-Flat Movement concerning governmental tactics and the fundamental characteristics of social advancement in modern societies. A profound societal shift in expectations and demands is reflected in the changing perceptions of public housing and welfare policies, as well as the shifting attitudes toward government assistance, especially among the middle class. Within this particular framework, the Lie-Flat Movement functions as a potent catalyst, compelling policymakers and the general populace to reassess the conventional frameworks and priorities that have dictated social and economic progress.

### 6.3 Boundaries and Future Inquiries

Although this analysis of the Lie-Flat Movement has yielded valuable insights, it is critical to recognize the inherent constraints of the research. The central emphasis has been placed on the movement as it has been observed within the particular setting of Hong Kong, supplemented by the use of comparative analysis. Limitations on the extent and uniformity of these comparative components could stem from variables such as the accessibility of data and cultural subtleties. Subsequent investigations ought to strive to rectify these constraints while further exploring the worldwide ramifications and cross-cultural aspects of this movement.

Furthermore, the examination detailed in this essay has been supported by a limited selection of sources in order to validate its claims and conclusions. In order to foster a more holistic comprehension of the Lie-Flat Movement, subsequent investigations ought to strive to integrate an expanded spectrum of viewpoints and scholarly publications. By doing so, the analysis would not only be more credible and trustworthy, but it would also offer a more comprehensive understanding of the socioeconomic effects of the movement on individuals, communities, and societies as a whole.

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