



Catholic Junior College
JC2 Preliminary Examination
Higher 1

GENERAL PAPER

8881/01

Paper 1

25 August 2025

1 hour 30 minutes

READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

Write your name and class on all the work you hand in.
Write in dark blue or black pen on both sides of the paper.
Do not use paper clips, highlighters, glue or correction fluid on your work.

Answer **one** question.

Note that up to **20** marks out of **50** will be awarded for your use of language.

At the end of the examination, fasten all your work securely together.
All questions in this paper carry equal marks.

Answer **one** question.

Answers should be between 500 and 800 words in length.

- 1 "Environmental conservation is a futile endeavour." To what extent is this true?
- 2 Assess the value of staging major entertainment events in your society.
- 3 To what extent is the management of infectious diseases the most pressing global issue today?
- 4 "Modern technology will mean the end of education." Is this a fair statement of your society?
- 5 "Small countries should be taken seriously today." How far do you agree?
- 6 "Sport is the most powerful tool a nation has to inspire pride." Discuss.
- 7 "The Arts have lost their significance today". How far do you agree?
- 8 Examine the view that in all areas of life, flexibility is key.

END OF PAPER

Passage 1: A writer explores the harms of crowds.

- 1 In our world today, people have at times allowed themselves to get swept up into the violent storm of groupthink, leading to collective emotions of hatred and anger, the loss of autonomy and the erasure of personal responsibility. This easily occurs at the behest of manipulative activists and politicians who seek not to unite and elevate us in love, but to control us through shared hostility. Our best defence against falling prey to destructive groupthink is to understand it. 1
5
- 2 Research over many years has shown that people can “catch” feelings by being in proximity to others who are experiencing those feelings intensely. This syndrome explains the sensation of being rapturously transported that people typically report when they participate in a mass exercise of praise and feel their inhibitions falling away. The result is an emotional positive sum, by which feelings of love and unity multiply through the group. 10
- 3 There can be a cost, however. Although this mind-melding is an emotionally rich experience, it may involve the crowd sacrificing its effective intelligence and wisdom. Scholars have demonstrated that crowds can become less discerning about factual accuracy than their individual members are. When social influence - the perception of whatever everyone else believes - is present, a crowd can become obstinately wrong. Any of us can be susceptible to the subtle social influence that induces groupthink: It is perfectly possible that things you have come to accept unquestioningly as true might have been learned in this way. 15
- 4 Moreover, the emotional contagion of crowds is not necessarily positive; negative emotions are contagious too. Scholars have written about moments when people in a mob barrel through the usual social restraints and erupt into disproportionate violence. This explains events such as soccer-crowd disorders, in which violence breaks out among sports fans when such contagious mass emotions meet a clear adversary among the other team’s supporters. 20
- 5 All of this brings us to the polarised moment in which we find ourselves, when a zero-sum, us-versus-them mentality has taken hold across the political spectrum in the United States, with the almost daily spectacle of crowds yelling angry slogans, trading insults, and resorting to naked aggression. This outcome was predictable, as both political parties in the United States have become more extreme in their partisanship, policies, and rhetoric, by most Americans’ reckoning. Even prestigious Ivy League college campuses are seeing more hate-filled protest activity than they have in the recent past. The coronavirus pandemic only accelerated the process, perhaps as a response to pent-up anguish, which has then been exploited by ideological leaders. 25
30
- 6 If you have ever found yourself in a crowd shouting hostile slogans in unison about another person or group at the encouragement of a populist leader, you have experienced this phenomenon firsthand. And modern technology has made life easier for social media users to drum up a cyber mob. Online crowds can be as unthinking as in-person ones, and can be whipped up in much the same way. All that has changed is that the soapbox orator of old has been superseded by an internet troll. 35

Passage 2: A psychologist writes about the benefits of crowds.

- 1 When we identify with the group and feel part of a shared experience, the benefits of being in a crowd are astounding. A huge number of studies shows improved mood, reduced loneliness, greater self-esteem and feelings of belonging when we are in a crowd. Feeling part of something that is bigger than yourself is a major source of well-being. 1
- 2 Using the internet and social media for engaging in group activity — particularly with a shared interest or 'cause' such as political or environmental activism, for example — leads to greater feelings of social support and life satisfaction. This kind of online activity can also lead to greater offline civic engagement as we tend to act on life-affirming intentions expressed by a group online. 5
- 3 When we are in a group, we allocate greater cognitive resources—focused attention and thought—to an activity because there is a social component to it. Emotions, when experienced in a crowd, take on an intensity that individuals would be hard-pressed to summon on their own. Furthermore, when we are in a group, we often start to move in time with others. Physiological measurements show our levels of arousal (gauged by indicators such as heart rate) tend to match others in the same group, even when we might only be observing rather than directly participating in the same event. This explains why being in a crowd helps with the cultivation of empathy: when we are in a state of cognitive and emotional synchronicity with others, we can easily identify with them, and imagine what they are feeling. The actions of a crowd can therefore reflect the compassion of the collective. 10
15
- 4 People are also increasingly turning to crowds to test the waters for opinions on products and services. Think TripAdvisor, Rotten Tomatoes and Pinterest. We trust the judgement of many and the validation it offers because we can identify with the reviewer who is a member of the public just like us. In recognition of this, more and more companies are using 'crowd marketing' techniques to reach their audience, and to boost their profitability. 20
- 5 The bottom line is that groups are usually beneficial. Crowds provide a positive kind of human experience not accessible alone or even in small gatherings. Some of their benefits can be found in online crowds — but the best experiences of all are to be found out there, in the 'real' world, face to face. 25

Passage 3: A writer expresses his thoughts about crowds.

- 1 Joining crowds can rob us of our agency, our capacity for rational thought and our sense of self and propriety. Violence and moral turpitude spread like a contagion, overpowering every crowd member. In short, we become bestial. Our politics, media and pop culture are replete with people in power decrying unthinking masses and stampeding hordes. 1
- 2 Fortunately, a new generation of crowd psychologists are developing fresh ideas. Detailed case studies have proved what many of us know instinctively: that joining a crowd of like-minded souls brings us kinship, confidence, and joy – and that every crowd contains a multitude of behaviours and psychological responses. Far from erasing our sense of self, coming together with fellow football fans, music fans, or people with the same political or religious affiliations can bring life-affirming moments of collective joy. 5
10
- 3 This does not mean all crowds are forces for good, of course. While my reporting has taken me to inspiring political protests, hedonistic global carnivals and other festivals in the name of journalism, I have also borne witness to sinister crowds which bear testament to the inhumane violence of the mob.
- 4 If we want to refresh our democracy, our culture and our civil society, the best place to start would be by paying some overdue respect to the complex powers of the crowd. 15

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CATHOLIC JUNIOR COLLEGE
 JC2 Preliminary Examination 2025
 General Certificate of Education Advanced Level
 Higher 1

CANDI
 DATE
 NAME

CLASS

GENERAL PAPER

Paper 2

8881/02

25 August 2025

1 hour 30

minutes

Candidates answer on the Question Paper.

Additional Materials: Insert

READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

Write your name and class on all the work you hand in.

Write in dark blue or black.

Do not use paper clips, glue or correction fluid.

Answer **all** questions.

The Insert contains the passages for comprehension.

Note that up to **15** marks out of **50** will be awarded for your use of language.

The number of marks is given in brackets [] at the end of each question or part question.

For Examiner's Use		
Content	Short-Answer Questions	/11
	Summary	/8
	New Item Type Question	/4
	Application Question	/12
Language		/15
Total		/50

For Examiner's Use

4 In paragraph 5, why does the author use the word “even” (line 29)?

.....
.....
.....
.....[2]

5 In paragraph 6, how does the use of language convey the author’s criticism of crowds on social media?

.....
.....
.....
.....[2]

[Turn over

From both passages

7 Passage 1 states that the crowd may end up 'sacrificing its effective intelligence and wisdom' (line 13).

Identify **one** specific idea from Passage 3 which can be used to support this statement. Justify your answer.

.....
.....
.....
.....[2]

8 Passage 2 states that the actions of a crowd can 'reflect the compassion of the collective.' (line 19).

Identify **one** specific idea from Passage 3 which can be used to undermine this statement. Justify your answer.

.....
.....
.....
.....[2]

[Turn over

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Answer all questions

Your answers should be:

- written in **your own words as far as possible**. Where you select the appropriate material from the passage for your answer, you must still use your own words to express it.
- Written in **continuous prose**.

From Passage 1

1. In paragraph 1, what does the author suggest are the possible consequences of groupthink? [3]

From the passage	Acceptable answers
leading to collective <i>(the question is already about groupthink)</i> emotions of hatred and anger , [both 'hatred' and 'anger' must be captured]	a. people would despise/ loathe/ feel resentment and fury/ rage [1] 0 marks = negative feelings (vague)/ disdain/ dislike/ angst/ frustration/ annoyed BOD 1= extreme/ intense dislike/ spite
the loss of autonomy	b. ... which can lead to erosion/ deprivation/ overwhelm individuals' rationality/ agency/ independent thought/ independence/ control over their own actions [1] 0= individuality/ freedom (on its own =wrong context); losing/ lose = lifted BOD= take charge/ self-control
and the erasure of personal responsibility	c. ... and remove/ reduce personal accountability/ ownership/ culpability [1] 0= reliability/ duty/ onus (wrong context)

2. In paragraph 3, what warning does the author offer about things we might have "come to accept unquestioningly as true" (line 18)? [2]

From the passage	Acceptable answers
Any of us can be susceptible to	a. ... because anybody/ anyone/ any person BOD 1= people/ we/ everybody (accept "any" but not the lifting of "any of us")
the subtle social influence that induces groupthink	...might be vulnerable/ fall prey to/ be an easy target for/ be affected by/ succumb to/ fall victim to/ be defenceless against/ be easily led to believe [note: just 'believing' is not the same as 'susceptible'] [1]
[note: can use the word groupthink]	b. by the indirect/ unnoticeable/ not obvious/ indistinct. BOD 1= <u>discreet</u> / hidden 0= subconscious/ unknowingly/ <u>discrete</u> (opposite meaning)
	... social <u>pressure</u> / <u>impact</u> / <u>manipulation</u> / (get swayed) that encourages groupthink [1]

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3. In paragraph 4, what is the author suggesting by using the word “contagious” (line 20)? [2]	
From the passage	Acceptable answers
... negative emotions are contagious too. (L19-20)	a) [Meaning] spreading [1] 0= affect others (only) [insufficient]
... people in a mob barrel through the usual social restraints and erupt into disproportionate violence (clue)	b) [Context] feelings of hatred/ anger/ animosity/ brutality/ aggressive feelings spread <u>among themselves</u> 0= bad (only)/ harmful/ adverse BOD 1= very bad (correct intensity)
4. In paragraph 5, why does the author use the word “even” (line 29)? [2]	
From the passage	Acceptable answers
Even prestigious Ivy League college campuses are seeing more hate-filled protest activity than they have in the recent past.	[FUNCTION] A1. To emphasise/ highlight/ stress OR express disbelief/ shock/ surprise, finds it unexpected/ ironic [1] 0= show/ support his view/ convey/ demonstrate/ prove OR A2. underscore the severity/ pervasiveness/ extent of the situation [1] [CONTEXT] B. This is because Ivy League colleges are typically associated with academic excellence/ rational discourse/ and a degree of social restraint , yet they are not exempt from/ still encounter angry demonstrations/ riots/ disorder/ unruly behaviour these elite institutions would usually be the last place one might expect such riotous behaviour. [1] 0= opposition/ demonstration (without the idea of being hate-filled)

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<p>5. In paragraph 6, how does the use of language convey the author’s criticism of crowds on social media? [2]</p>	
From the passage	Acceptable answers
<p>a) cyber mob</p> <p>b) who can use social media to drum up a cyber mob/ online crowds . . .</p> <p>c) can be whipped up in much the same way.</p> <p>d) Online crowds can be as unthinking as in-person ones, and can be whipped up in much the same way.</p> <p><i>0 for “found yourself in a crowd shouting hostile slogans in unison about another person or group at the encouragement of a populist leader” as this is not about online crowds</i></p> <p><i>0 for “trolls” and “soapbox orator” (not about crowds on social media)</i></p>	<p>a) The writer uses the word “mob” to show that the crowds on social media are like violent gangs/ unruly/ disorderly/ inflamed or worked up by trouble-makers/ intent on causing trouble/ prone to violence</p> <p>b) Uses the phrase “drum up” to show that crowds can be easily worked up/ provoked/ aroused to anger/ stirred into a frenzy/ craze</p> <p>c) Uses the phrase “<u>whipped up</u>” to show that people can be easily worked up/ provoked/ aroused to anger/ stirred into a frenzy/ craze</p> <p>d) Uses the word “unthinking” to show how crowds can be reckless/ impulsive/ rash/ foolish/ stupid 0= thoughtless (lift of root word)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Accept any 2 ideas.</p> <p>[Note: Must quote the actual word/ phrase, then explain it to get the mark]</p>

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From Passage 2

6. Summarise the benefits of crowds.

Write your summary in **no more than 120 words**. [8]

From the passage		Acceptable answers
improved mood	a	more joyful / cheerful [0= feelings]
reduced loneliness	b	lessened isolation/ alone [0= increase friendships/ connections]
greater self-esteem	c	increased confidence / self-assurance
feelings of belonging / feeling part of something that is bigger than yourself	d	sense of community / identity/ inclusivity/ acceptance
major source of well-being	e	huge source of mental health/ health [0= physical health]
greater feelings of social support	f	heightened sense of group/ community assistance / encouragement/ help/ guidance
and life satisfaction	g	and contentment
greater offline civic engagement	h	more involvement in real-world community affairs
we allocate greater cognitive resources—focussed attention and thought	i	We put in more mental effort/ more alert in terms of what attracts / interests us
Emotions,take on an intensity that individuals would be hard-pressed to summon on their own	j	Feelings are heightened beyond what a person would be able to achieve alone
we often start to move in time with others	k	We act together as one/ in-sync
helps with the cultivation of empathy	l	leads to the development of understanding/ ability to relate to others/
reflect the compassion of the collective	m	demonstrate the sympathy/ care/ kindness/ understanding of the community
test the waters for opinions on products and services	n	gauge / assess views / consumer feedback on products and services
trust the judgement of many and the validation it offers	o	... have faith/ confidence in the evaluation/ assessment and affirmation of the majority
reach their audience	p	Appeal to/ entice/ access their consumer base / customers
boost their profitability	q	and improve / raise their earnings/ increase revenue

Points	1-2	3-4	5	6	7	8	9	10 or more
Marks	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

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From all the passages

7 Passage 1 states that crowds may end up 'sacrificing its effective intelligence and wisdom' (line 13).
Identify **one** specific idea from Passage 3 which can be used to support this statement. Justify your answer. [2]

Selected idea from Passage 3	Suggested paraphrase of Passage 3	Suggested Justification
Joining crowds can rob us of our agency, our capacity for rational thought (line 1)	a. We lose our capacity /ability to be logical / reasoned [1]	This supports the idea that crowds may end up giving up their ability to think and judge properly because when groups of people come together, they might lose their ability to think clearly or make sound decisions/ think critically/ exercise good judgement. [1] Accept paraphrase of either 'intelligence' or 'wisdom'.
people in power decrying unthinking masses (lines 3-4)	b. Influential people often criticize/ condemn crowds for being uncritical [1]	

8. Passage 2 states that the actions of a crowd can 'reflect the compassion of the collective.' (line 19).

Identify **one** specific idea from Passage 3 which can be used to undermine this statement. Justify your answer. [2]

Selected idea from Passage 3	Suggested paraphrase of Passage 3	Suggested Justification
In short, we become bestial . (line 3)	a. Crowds can act savagely / cruelly/ aggressively/ animal-like [1]	Which challenges the notion that crowds tend to act with kindness / with care/ humanely as a group as group dynamics can unleash destructive behaviour. [1] O= concern/ positive feelings Or The fact that group dynamics can unleash destructive rather than empathetic impulses challenges the notion that crowds tend to act kindly, in accordance to their shared sympathy/ empathy. [1]
Violence and moral turpitude spread like a contagion, overpowering every crowd member. In short, we become bestial... madding crowds, stampeding hordes (lines 2-5)	b. <u>Brutality / aggression and unethical / unconscionable ways</u> can proliferate uncontrollably within crowds [1]	
... sinister crowds which bear testament to the inhumane violence of the mob (lines 14-15)	c. <i>evil/ malicious/ menacing/ wicked</i> crowds can / have been known to be stirred into a frenzied/ aggressive/ brutal rampage [1] O= criminal/ cunning	

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NIT: Points must be identified correctly for marks to be awarded for justification.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 9 | <p>The reading passages cover a range of views about crowds.</p> <p>How far do you agree that crowds bring about more benefits than harm?</p> <p>Support your answer with reference to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the ideas and opinions from at least one of the reading passages • examples drawn from your own experience and that of your society. [12] |
|---|---|

Harms

Passage 1, Paragraph 6

“... modern technology has made life easier for social media users to drum up a cyber mob. Online crowds can be as unthinking as in-person ones, and can be whipped up in much the same way.”

Application to Singapore

- Cancel culture is prevalent in Singapore where netizens tend to jump on the proverbial bandwagon to cut public figures down to size.
- In Singapore, influencer culture has been on the rise in recent years as more Singaporeans are coming around to the idea that being an influencer can not only be a viable career but also a lucrative one.
- To gain the lion’s share of the attention economy in Singapore, many of these influencers post content about their personal lives to relate to Singaporeans.
- Unfortunately, this only makes them vulnerable to the online mob.

Example

- Prominent local influencer, Jianhao Tan, was roundly criticized by netizens in 2024 for failing to make proper logistical arrangements for American live streamer IShowSpeed’s first live stream in Singapore. IShowSpeed sought the help of Tan because he needed a tour guide to show him around Singapore.
- Tan took IShowSpeed to Universal Studios where he encountered various filming restrictions; consequently, IShowSpeed cut off his live stream abruptly due to frustration.
- In the aftermath of the incident, Tan was on the receiving end of online vitriol blaming him for the failed live stream.
- Unbeknownst to the many members of the online mob, it was IShowSpeed who insisted on going to Universal Studios, even though Tan had recommended other places instead.

Evaluation + link to question

- This incident is yet another example of tall poppy syndrome where many Singaporeans derive pleasure from attacking successful influencers due in part to jealousy.

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- Members of online crowds like the one that attacked Tan goad each other on, and reinforce one another's erroneous beliefs, creating echo chambers in the process.
- This is detrimental to civil society in Singapore.
- Grievous harm can also be caused when the livelihoods of influencers are adversely affected.

Benefits

Passage 2, Paragraph 1

A huge number of studies shows improved mood, reduced loneliness, greater self-esteem and feelings of belonging when we are in a crowd. Feeling part of something that is bigger than yourself is a major source of well-being.

Application to Singapore

- This explains why many Singaporeans still attend election rallies in the lead-up to general elections despite the affordances of social media which would allow them to watch the rallies online.
- Many political candidates rely on fiery rhetoric to appeal to Singaporeans' nationalistic feelings of pride.
- The feeling of being part of a stadium charged with frenzied emotion cannot be replicated.
- Concerts have also become a staple in Singapore. Recent concerts have drawn large crowds of Singaporeans who wish to immerse in the electrifying atmosphere at these concerts

Examples

- Fans of Taylor Swift attended her recent concert in Singapore not only to witness their object of their adulation in person, but also to hobnob with other fans.
- The "Swiftie" community in Singapore is a highly communal one where fans often meet up to watch her televised concerts together, or to make friendship bracelets. The mutual exchange of friendship bracelets is a ritual at Taylor Swift concerts.

Sample Answer:

Singapore is a very small nation with an extremely high population density. Crowds are therefore a regular part of daily life in this island nation. Furthermore, our society is highly wired, and the phenomenon of online 'crowds' is common. Having experienced such crowds myself, I believe that, for the most part, crowds bring more harm than benefits.

This is in accordance with what the author claims in passage 1, paragraph 6, that "... modern technology has made life easier for social media users to drum up a cyber mob. Online crowds can be as unthinking as in-person ones, and can be whipped up in much the same way." This is rather accurate and very applicable to Singapore's context. For one, cancel culture is prevalent in Singapore where netizens tend to jump on the proverbial bandwagon to cut public figures down to size. Furthermore, influencer culture has been on the rise in recent years as more Singaporeans are coming around to the idea that being an influencer can not only be a viable career but also a lucrative one. Therefore, to gain the lion's share of the attention economy in Singapore, many of these influencers post content about their personal lives to relate

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to Singaporeans. Unfortunately, this only makes them vulnerable to the online mob. For example, prominent local influencer, Jianhao Tan, was roundly criticized by netizens in 2024 for failing to make proper logistical arrangements for American live streamer IShowSpeed's first live stream in Singapore. Originally, IShowSpeed sought the help of Tan because he needed a tour guide to show him around Singapore. Tan took IShowSpeed to Universal Studios where he encountered various filming restrictions; consequently, IShowSpeed cut off his live stream abruptly due to frustration. In the aftermath of the incident, Tan was on the receiving end of online vitriol blaming him for the failed live stream. Unbeknownst to the many members of the online mob, it was IShowSpeed who insisted on going to Universal Studios, even though Tan had recommended other places instead. This incident is yet another example of tall poppy syndrome where many Singaporeans derive pleasure from attacking successful influencers due in part to jealousy. Members of online crowds like the one that attacked Tan goad each other on, and reinforce one another's erroneous beliefs, creating echo chambers in the process. This is detrimental to civil society in Singapore and grievous harm can also be caused when the livelihoods of influencers are adversely affected.

However, I do acknowledge that crowds do not always bring harm. In fact, crowds can be beneficial at times. In passage 2, paragraph 1, the author claims that "A huge number of studies shows improved mood, reduced loneliness, greater self-esteem and feelings of belonging when we are in a crowd. Feeling part of something that is bigger than yourself is a major source of well-being." This can be true in some cases, especially in relation to two recent events in Singapore. Loneliness continues to be a chronic malaise in Singapore that plagues different demographic groups. A recent concern raised by local media outlets is the prevalence of loneliness amongst young Singaporeans. A recent Institute of Policy Studies poll showed that young Singaporeans aged twenty-one to thirty-four faced the highest levels of loneliness and social isolation. Attending events that draw huge crowds can help alleviate loneliness, even if it only serves as a temporary stopgap measure. Over the past few years, high-profile celebrities such as Taylor Swift have held their concerts in Singapore as they are drawn to Singapore's well-developed infrastructure and strategic location. Fans of Taylor Swift attended her recent concert in Singapore not only to witness their object of their adulation in person, but also to hobnob with other fans. The "Swiftie" community in Singapore is a highly communal one where fans often meet up to watch her televised concerts together, or to make friendship bracelets. The mutual exchange of friendship bracelets is a familiar ritual at Taylor Swift concerts and fan meetings. Ultimately, attending events that draw huge crowds can help individuals who struggle with loneliness feel a sense of belonging to a group. Being in the midst of a crowd with kindred spirits serves as a visual reminder that there are people with similar interests living in the same society, and this can be infinitely reassuring to those who feel isolated. Thus I do acknowledge that crowds can bring some benefits.

Alternatively:

I believe that crowds, for the most part, bring more benefits than harm. An undeniable benefit of crowds can be seen in passage 2, where the author states that "a huge number of studies shows improved mood, reduced loneliness, greater self-esteem and feelings of belonging when we are in a crowd. Feeling part of something that is bigger than yourself is a major source of well-being." Loneliness continues to be a chronic malaise in Singapore that plagues different demographic groups. A recent concern raised by local media outlets is the prevalence of loneliness amongst young Singaporeans. A recent Institute of Policy Studies poll showed that young Singaporeans aged twenty one to thirty four faced the highest levels of loneliness and social isolation. Attending events that draw huge crowds can help alleviate loneliness, even if it only serves as a temporary stopgap measure. Over the past few years, high-profile celebrities such as Taylor Swift have held their concerts in Singapore as they are drawn to Singapore's well-developed infrastructure and strategic location. Fans of Taylor Swift attended her recent concert in Singapore not only to witness their object of their adulation in person, but also to hobnob with other fans. The "Swiftie" community in Singapore is a highly communal one where fans often meet up to watch her televised concerts together, or

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to make friendship bracelets. The mutual exchange of friendship bracelets is a familiar ritual at Taylor Swift concerts and fan meetings. Ultimately, attending events that draw huge crowds can help individuals who struggle with loneliness feel a sense of belonging to a group. Being in the midst of a crowd with kindred spirits serves as a visual reminder that there are people with similar interests living in the same society, and this can be infinitely reassuring to those who feel isolated.

Admittedly, crowds can be harmful when mob behaviour spirals out of control on the internet. As stated in passage one, “modern technology has made life easier for rabble-rousers, who can use social media to drum up a cyber mob. Online crowds can be as unthinking as in-person ones, and can be whipped up in much the same way.” Cancel culture is prevalent in Singapore where netizens tend to jump on the proverbial bandwagon to cut public figures down to size. In Singapore, influencer culture has been on the rise in recent years as more Singaporeans are coming around to the idea that being an influencer can not only be a viable career but also a lucrative one. To gain the lion’s share of the attention economy in Singapore, many of these influencers post content about their personal lives to relate to Singaporeans. Unfortunately, this only makes them vulnerable to the online mob. For example, Prominent local influencer, Jianhao Tan, was roundly criticized by netizens in 2024 for failing to make proper logistical arrangements for American live streamer IShowSpeed’s first live stream in Singapore. IShowSpeed sought the help of Tan because he needed a tour guide to show him around Singapore. Tan took IShowSpeed to Universal Studios where he encountered various filming restrictions; consequently, IShowSpeed cut off his live stream abruptly due to frustration. In the aftermath of the incident, Tan was on the receiving end of online vitriol blaming him for the failed live stream. Unbeknownst to the many members of the online mob, it was IShowSpeed who insisted on going to Universal Studios, even though Tan had recommended other places instead. This incident is yet another example of tall poppy syndrome where many Singaporeans derive pleasure from attacking successful influencers due in part to jealousy. Members of online crowds like the one that attacked Tan goad each other on, and reinforce one another’s erroneous beliefs, creating echo chambers in the process. This is injurious to civil society in Singapore; in addition, grievous harm can also be caused when the livelihoods of influencers are adversely affected. However, one must also acknowledge that crowds can also serve as an effective form of checks and balances when misinformation is spread on social media.

Furthermore, it cannot be denied that crowds can also be beneficial for local businesses. According to passage 2, “more and more companies are using ‘crowd marketing’ techniques to reach their audience, and to boost their profitability.” Traditional marketing strategies such as the creation of printed advertisements are considered outmoded in Singapore where social media campaigns are seen as not only more economical but also more appealing to a younger demographic. A recent business trend in Singapore is the establishment of home-based cafes. Singaporeans who aspire to enter the food and beverage industry, but who do not wish to be saddled with the costs involved in setting up a brick-and-mortar shop, choose to run their cafés from the comfort of their homes. The only way for them to draw customers is to rely on crowd marketing strategies such as hiring local influencers to generate publicity. Otherwise, potential customers would not even know that these home cafes exist. One example of such a home café is Coffee by the Porch—a café that is, as suggested by its name, situated at the porch of the owner’s terrace home. Its reputation has been steadily growing as it has been featured by local influencers such as Yong Wei Kai who runs the popular “SGCafeHopping” account on Instagram. Singaporeans, being inveterate “foodies” who are always up for a good meal, would naturally spread word about a home café that serves appetizing food and drinks. In Singapore, crowds can benefit local businesses that do not have the wherewithal that bigger establishments have to launch aggressive and sustained marketing campaigns.

