

Dou, D., Wu, X., Zhang, S., & Shek, D. T. L. (2023). Evaluating the impact of a national education program for taught postgraduate students in Hong Kong. *International Journal of Child Health and Human Development*, 16(4), 279 – 288.

Int J Child Health Hum Dev 2023;16(4):00-00.

Running title: TPG students' subjective outcome evaluation

Evaluating the impact of a national education program for taught postgraduate students in Hong Kong

Diya Dou, PhD¹, Xue Wu, PhD², Shunhao Zhang, MSSc² and Daniel TL Shek, PhD, FHKPS, BBS, SBS, JP¹

¹Department of Applied Social Sciences, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong, PR China and ²Office of Undergraduate Studies, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong, PR China

Abstract: This study evaluated a national education program that covers “the history of China and Hong Kong”, “law-abiding leadership”, and “the Hong Kong National Security Law (HKNSL)” in taught postgraduate students in a university in Hong Kong. This study examined students' perceptions of the course attributes, understanding of national education and law-abiding behaviors, and self-paced learning, as well as the role of student perceptions of the program in predicting the overall satisfaction rate. We collected data from 1,808 taught postgraduate students via online survey at a university in Hong Kong. Results revealed that students demonstrated high satisfaction with the national education program and they had a favorable perception of the national education program. Moreover, multiple regression analyses indicated that different aspects of students' perceptions significantly predicted their overall satisfaction with the program. The present study underscores the value of the online national education program and suggests the usefulness of self-paced learning arrangement in delivering sensitive topics such as the HKNSL. Limitations and implications for future studies are discussed.

Keywords: Taught postgraduates, national education, self-paced learning, online learning, subjective outcome evaluation

Correspondence: Daniel TL Shek, PhD, FHKPS, BBS, SBS, JP, Associate Vice President (Undergraduate Programme), Chair Professor of Applied Social Sciences and Li and Fung Professor in Service Leadership Education, Department of Applied Social Sciences, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hungghom, Hong Kong, PR China. Email: daniel.shek@polyu.edu.hk

Submitted: October 05, 2023. **Revised:** October 14, 2023. **Accepted:** October 19, 2023.

Introduction

In recent years, postgraduate degree programs have become increasingly popular in Hong Kong, attracting students from diverse academic backgrounds and geographical locations (1). Currently, the eight public universities in Hong Kong offer over 500 postgraduate programs, including “research postgraduate (RPg) programs” (Master of Philosophy (MPhil) or Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) programs) and “taught postgraduate (TPg) programs” (e.g., Master of Arts (MA), Master of Science (MSc) and Master of Social Science (MSSc or MSocSc) programs) (1). While MPhil and PhD programs prepare students for research-oriented careers, TPg programs are primarily

coursework-based and aim to foster students' professional skills and competencies, enabling them to pursue careers in their respective fields (2). As TPg programs in Hong Kong usually last for 1 to 1.5 years for a full-time period of study and place less emphasis on academic research skills, they attract a plethora of fresh undergraduates or professionals who wish to improve their academic qualifications, with the majority of admitted students coming from mainland China (1,3).

Given Hong Kong's unique social and geographical status, studying in Hong Kong makes almost no difference from studying abroad for non-local students, which requires them to adapt to the social and educational systems different from their home countries. It has been reported that some students experience "feelings of frustration, anxiety, and defeat" during their sojourn in Hong Kong (4). Moreover, due to the political and cultural complexity in Hong Kong, overseas students, especially those from Mainland China, often need help to adapt to academic and local norms. As Yu and Zhang (5) pointed out, Mainland students in Hong Kong often experience the "Mainland-Hong Kong Conflict" as the result of the "linguistic, socio-cultural, and political differences between Hong Kong and the Mainland", and often find the political turbulence in Hong Kong confusing, which may make them either become indifferent towards political issues, or grow erroneous appreciation and empathy towards Hongkongers involved in unlawful social movements in Hong Kong. Meanwhile, according to Tran and Vu (6), "the issue of student responsibility and capacity to exercise responsibility is becoming increasingly important in student mobility as these students have to live and study out of their socio-cultural comfort zone". Consequently, universities in Hong Kong have an obligation to provide relevant support to help them better adapt to the academic and sociocultural context.

"The 2019 Anti-Extradition Law Amendment Bill Movement" (commonly known as "the 2019 Hong Kong protest") and the COVID-19 pandemic have significantly impacted the traditional teaching mode in universities and altered students' perceptions and expectations of their learning experiences in Hong Kong. On the one hand, "the 2019 Hong Kong protest" disrupted the teaching orders of almost all universities in Hong Kong due to the damage to campus facilities and conflicts between student protesters, faculties, and the police (7,8). On the other hand, the border closure and social distancing policies entailed by the COVID-19 pandemic have forced teaching activities to transfer from the traditional face-to-face mode to online or hybrid modes. With the introduction of the "Law of the People's Republic of China on Safeguarding National Security in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region" (also known as the "Hong Kong National Security Law", "NSL") (9) and the gradual removal of pandemic-related restrictions, Hong Kong society is regaining stability, and Hong Kong universities are resuming regular teaching schedules accordingly. Consequently, maintaining the degree of internationalization of Hong Kong universities, regaining international students' trust to study in Hong Kong (4), and propelling students to become law-abiding and socially responsible citizens have become salient tasks for universities in Hong Kong (10). Meanwhile, with the implementation of the National Security Law (NSL) in Hong Kong that leads to changes and disputes in various domains, it is necessary to help non-local students understand the academic and local norms, establish academic identities beneficial for learning and life experiences during their sojourn in Hong Kong, and foster them into socially responsible citizens both in and outside Hong Kong.

With Article 10 of NSL demanding national security education to be implemented in educational institutions across Hong Kong in order to "raise the awareness of Hong Kong residents of national security and of the obligation to abide by the law" (11), all public

universities in Hong Kong have integrated national education in their programs as an essential part of the graduation requirements for students. Such education modules generally combine face-to-face lectures, pre-recorded online lectures, reading materials for self-study, and assessments (12-14). While such modules in most universities only target undergraduate students at the moment, “The Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU)” has made it a requirement for students at all levels, with slight differences in delivery modes and contents between different levels (15). For taught postgraduate students, national education is employed as the “Education on ‘Understanding China and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, P.R.C.’”, which includes a 3-hour e-learning module, 3-hour self-study with 20 lecture notes, and an assessment containing 10 multiple choice questions allowing for multiple attempts (15). The aim of this module for TPg students is to offer “some understanding of China and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, including modern Chinese history, restoration of Hong Kong to the People’s Republic of China in 1997, Hong Kong Basic Law, and Hong Kong National Security Law”, to help them make “successful and healthy adjustments when they study in Hong Kong, serve as ‘ambassadors’ to promote Hong Kong” as “potential leaders of the society” (15).

The current study is important for three reasons. First, it is crucial to understand how students receiving national education perceive their learning experiences and utilize evidence-based results to validate the necessity and effectiveness of such education (16). Although prior research has indicated positive feedback from university students regarding the NSL, national education programs in Hong Kong have faced continuous scrutiny and criticism for being perceived as brainwashing or a “legitimate instrument for social control and silencing criticisms” (10). This underscores the need for further investigation into the necessity and effectiveness of national education (16). Secondly, while most existing studies have shown positive feedback from students and teachers concerning national education experiences, they have yet to specifically focus on taught postgraduate students. Given these students’ unique backgrounds, motivations for studying in Hong Kong, and plans of these students compared to undergraduate and research postgraduate students, their perceived values and attitudes towards national education may also differ. Lastly, while prior research has shown that lecture-based national education is effective in helping Hong Kong university students develop a deep understanding of law and respect for law abidance (17), there is still a need to understand the effectiveness of self-paced learning modalities. Consequently, this study aims to replicate and validate these findings to justify the need and benefits of NSL education in Hong Kong universities. This study aims to answer the following research questions:

Research question 1: What are students’ perceptions towards the “Education on “Understanding China and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, P.R.C.”” regarding course attributes (CA), understanding of national education and law-abiding behavior (UNE), and self-paced learning (SP)? We expected the participants to generally have positive attitudes towards the program and corresponding aspects (Hypothesis 1a to Hypothesis 1c).

Research question 2: What are the relationships between the three aspects of student perception and their overall satisfaction? We expected positive inter-correlations amongst the related subscales (Hypothesis 2a), and between the three subscales and overall satisfaction (Hypothesis 2b). Additionally, we anticipated that all three subscales, including CA, UNE, and SP, would predict students’ overall satisfaction (Hypothesis 2c).

Methods

Student evaluation survey is a commonly used measure in evaluating course quality in higher education, and it is effective in “gauging consensus among students and identifying trends” (18). According to Denson and colleagues (19), course evaluation encompasses two primary purposes, including obtaining “student feedback regarding courses and teaching for improvement purposes” and providing “a defined and practical process to ensure that actions are taken to improve courses and teaching”. Consequently, the current study employed a post-lecture online evaluation survey to obtain students’ feedback on the national education program at the authors’ university.

Survey participants in this study were taught postgraduate students who took the “Understanding China and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, P.R.C.” program during Semester 1, 2022/23 academic year. Informed consent was obtained from participants, who were aware of the research objectives, the study’s confidentiality, and that the findings would be exclusively and anonymously used for educational purposes.

Survey items were selected based on their relevance to the course content and learning outcomes. They were drawn from previous evaluation studies on similar education programs at the same university (10,17), which adopted 26 and 28 items, respectively, to investigate students’ perceptions of lectures. Due to the differences in course content, delivery mode, and target students from the two previous studies, the current study made some modifications to the survey items. Specifically, while two studies mentioned above investigated courses delivered online and face-to-face, the course evaluated in the current study only includes online mode, which does not have opportunities for face-to-face interaction and participation. Consequently, we omitted several items that assessed factors unique to in-person classes, resulting in a trimmed 19-item survey. In another article within this particular issue, we performed a confirmatory factor analysis on a 19-item scale derived from research involving postgraduate students. This scale displayed a three-factor structure, encompassing course attributes (CA), understanding of national education and law-abiding behaviors (UNE), and self-paced learning (SP), which aligns with previous studies (10, 17). Items 1 through 6 pertain to CA, items 7 through 15 are associated with UNE, and items 16 through 18 fall under SP. Item 19 (“Overall, I have a very positive evaluation of this course”) acts as a general indicator of the overall satisfaction. A 6-point Likert Scale was employed for each item (1 = “Strongly Disagree”; 6 = “Strongly Agree”), with “1”, “2”, and “3” regarded as negative responses and “4”, “5”, and “6” considered as positive responses. The 19 items are listed as follows:

- 1) “The design of this course was very good.”
- 2) “There were many opportunities for reflection in this course.”
- 3) “This course is helpful to my personal development.”
- 4) “This course has improved my problem-solving ability.”
- 5) “This course has improved my understanding of the importance of attributes of successful leaders (e.g., critical thinking, moral competence, law abidance etc.)”
- 6) “This course has improved my critical thinking.”
- 7) “This course helps me understand the knowledge of the history of Modern China.”
- 8) “This course helps me understand the knowledge of the history of Hong Kong.”
- 9) “This course has helped me understand the concepts of national security.”
- 10) “I understand that national security is important for the stability of a society.”

- 11) “This course has helped me understand the offenses and penalties surrounding the Hong Kong National Security Law.”
- 12) “This course has helped me understand the importance of implementing the Hong Kong National Security Law.”
- 13) “This course has helped me clarify some myths related to Hong Kong National Security Law.”
- 14) “I will try my best to serve as a law-abiding citizen.”
- 15) “I will try my best to serve as a socially responsible leader.”
- 16) “The self-paced online learning course enabled me to learn more efficiently about this course.”
- 17) “The self-paced online learning course allows me to learn the course materials according to my own situation.”
- 18) “Overall speaking, I like the self-paced online learning experience.”
- 19) “Overall speaking, I have a very positive evaluation of this course.”

Apart from the 19 items pertaining to course evaluation, personal information, including gender and age, was also collected. An open-ended question was included at the end of the survey to gather further comments on the course, which asked participants to provide additional feedback or suggestions for course improvement.

Among 2,860 taught postgraduate students who attended the e-learning module and passed the assessment, 1,808 completed the online evaluation survey, resulting in a response rate of 63.22%. Richardson (20) contended that “response rates of 60% or more are both desirable and achievable for students who have satisfactorily completed their course units of programs” in course experience surveys via mail. Given that response rates of online surveys are lower than those conducted via offline means (21), the response rate in the current study can be considered satisfactory.

Data analysis

Data analysis was carried out using SPSS 26.0. Descriptive statistical analysis was first conducted to summarize the number of responses, means, and standard deviations (SD) of the overall and individual responses, indicating students’ perceptions of the course. Inter-correlations among age, gender, the three subscales (i.e., CA, UNE, SP), and overall satisfaction (item 19) were also examined. Multiple regression analysis was then performed to examine the prediction of CA, UNE, and SP on students’ overall satisfaction.

Table 1

Table 2

Results

After the MCQ assessment, a total of 1,808 post-lecture subjective outcome evaluation questionnaires were gathered from taught postgraduate students. The descriptive findings based on the number of responses, means, standard deviations (SD) and percentage of responses of each item or three subscales are displayed in tables 1 and 2, respectively. A number of observations can be drawn from the percentage findings in table 1. First, most students showed positive perceptions of the program (positive responses > 88.59%). For example, 94.46% of the respondents regarded the course design as excellent and clear to understand, and 98.66% claimed

they volunteered to be good citizens and abide by the laws after the course. In addition, the students perceived the course was beneficial for their inter- or intra-personal development, including competencies of problem-solving (Item 4: 88.59%) and critical thinking (Item 6: 91.00%), as well as promoted reflection (Item 2: 92.64%). Finally, students generally appreciated the self-paced online learning experience (Item 18: 97.46%), as such a mode enabled students to learn more efficiently about the course contents (Item 16: 97.02%) and based on their situation (Item 17: 97.45%). Hypotheses 1a to 1c were supported.

Table 3

Table 3 shows the inter-correlations of the items from the coding schemes used to capture students' perceptions of the program from different aspects, including SP, CA, and UNE. All subscales showed significant inter-correlations ($r_s > .698, p < .001$), supporting Hypothesis 2a. As expected, students' perceptions in SP, UNE, and CA were significantly correlated with the overall course satisfaction, supporting Hypothesis 2b. The strongest correlate of course satisfaction was "understanding of national education and law-abiding behavior" (UNE) ($r = .880, p < .001$).

TRable 4

Results of multiple regression analyses are presented in table 4. In Model 1, age and gender were entered as predictors. The results revealed that Model 1 accounted for a small proportion of the variance in overall satisfaction ($R^2 = 0.034, F \text{ change} = 26.26, p < 0.001$). In Model 2, SP, CA, and UNE were incorporated into the model while controlling for age and gender. The addition of these variables considerably enhanced the model's predictive ability for overall satisfaction ($R^2 = 0.791, F \text{ change} = 2256.93, p < 0.001$). As shown in Table 4, UNE emerged as the most significant predictor of overall satisfaction (CA: $\beta = .321, t = 16.27, p < .001, \text{Cohen's } f^2 = .177$; UNE: $\beta = .452, t = 18.69, p < .001, \text{Cohen's } f^2 = .234$; SP: $\beta = .201, t = 10.84, p < .001, \text{Cohen's } f^2 = .079$). The findings supported Hypothesis 2c.

Discussion

The current study examined students' perceptions and perceived effectiveness of the program entitled "Understanding China and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, P.R.C." offered at one Hong Kong university. It contributes to the existing literature on national education in Hong Kong universities by examining the perceptions of taught postgraduate students towards the national education program. There are two unique features. First, it paid particular attention to taught postgraduate students, providing new insights into how national education is perceived by students with different backgrounds, motivations, and plans compared to undergraduate and research postgraduate students. Secondly, the study utilized a three-subscale model to gauge students' perceptions of the course, which demonstrated its effectiveness in predicting students' attitudes toward the course.

A number of observations could be drawn from the findings. First, similar to our previous evaluation studies based on the subjects provided to undergraduate students via different learning mode, the findings suggested that the positive response rates of participants were overwhelmingly high, suggesting that the national education program was well-received by students. One possible reason for the high satisfaction rate could be that the participants in this study were primarily taught postgraduate students, a significant portion of whom came from

mainland China. These students are more likely to have a strong sense of national identity and to have favorable opinions of their home country (22). Nevertheless, it is evident that most participants do not oppose such as national education program. In other words, it dispels the myth that teaching university students about national security education would be a bad experience for them. Meanwhile, negative perceptions regarding various aspects of the program offer opportunities for refinement and enhancement of national education delivery in the future. Overall, the high levels of student satisfaction in this study challenge the criticisms that national education is inherently detrimental and unappealing to students.

Secondly, all aspects of the program, including course attributes (CA), understanding of national education and law-abiding behaviors (UNE), and self-paced learning arrangement (SP), were perceived positively by the students. Regarding course attributes, students predominantly agreed that the course design was practical and contributed to their holistic development in various areas, such as problem-solving ability, interpersonal skills, and inclination to become law-abiding citizens and socially responsible leaders. Moreover, most students concurred that the course enhanced their comprehension of China and Hong Kong's history, the concepts and importance of national security, the significance of implementing "the Hong Kong National Security Law", and addressed misconceptions related to the HKNSL. It is worth noting that even for overseas taught postgraduate students who may leave Hong Kong after graduation, this course can also assist them to become socially responsible leaders and law-abiding citizens in their home countries or elsewhere.

Regarding determinants of perceived efficacy, we also investigated which factors could affect students' overall opinion of the program. Results of multiple regression analysis suggested that perceived course design, self-paced learning mode, content on national education and law-abiding leadership, as well as benefits predicted students' overall satisfaction with the online course, although their relative importance varied for different predictors. These results are largely in line with earlier studies showing that students' satisfaction of the program was influenced by how they viewed the curriculum design (23). In addition, the UNE attribute was the strongest predictor for overall satisfaction among all three attributes. According to Shek et al. (10), there exist disparities regarding the views on HKNSL between Hong Kong and overseas contexts, with Western countries constantly framing HKNSL as a threat to the autonomy of Hong Kong. Being affected by such biased discourse, overseas students may adopt a critical attitude toward HKNSL. They may need clarification on the purpose of national education when they begin their study in Hong Kong universities. Consequently, the high student satisfaction rate revealed by the current study has to some extent, indicated that the program had achieved great success in helping taught postgraduate students increase their knowledge in history, national security, and HKNSL, offering them an all-around view on relevant discourses. In future, it would be beneficial to assist students in understanding the advantages and worth of the learning. For example, students can be encouraged to reflect individually on what they have learned and how they have changed due to the course.

Additionally, most students held positive views towards the self-paced online learning mode, as they believed it could enable them to assimilate knowledge more efficiently according to their circumstances. Meanwhile, tangible facts allowed quick access to the course video and lecture notes and to see what moment by moment. As pointed out by Tullis and Benjamin (24), allowing students to allocate their learning time and contents freely can help promote positive learning performance and outcomes while enhancing their memory. Therefore, it can be inferred that students gained a positive learning experience and benefited from the self-paced learning mode,

which is conducive to their learning motivation and outcomes and their understanding of national education. Similarly, as most local students choose to obtain a professional diploma part-time in addition to their regular work, self-paced online learning provides them with flexible time without moving to the site of study. Moreover, Dumford and Miller (25) noted that students taking online courses are more likely to engage in “quantitative reasoning, that is, the ability to think critically about the quantitative evidence in the evaluation, construction, and communication of arguments in public, professional, and personal life” (26). Aldulaimi and his colleagues (27) also regarded self-paced learning as an effective way to improve students’ self-efficacy in challenging learning environments where students lack the opportunities to interact with lecturers and peers. Thus, as the students pointed out in the survey, such a self-paced learning mode benefited their independent and critical thinking capacity, thus enhancing their understanding of national security, NSL, and law abidance. In addition, as national education is still considered politically sensitive, online self-learning also grants students a more comfortable learning environment to reflect on sensitive issues such as the HKNSL and the sentencing of related cases. Therefore, this finding provides insights for course designers to involve more self-paced learning in similar programs in the future to achieve better learning and teaching outcomes.

To sum up, the findings mentioned above are consistent with the findings of Shek et al (16). They served as evidence to rebut the claim that Hong Kong university students are recalcitrant to take national education. However, despite the fact that the current study has provided support for the value of the program, it has several limitations. First, because the students participated in the study in a voluntary and anonymous manner, the participants may not be representative of all TPg populations. Hence, we should be careful about the generalizability of the findings. In addition, if a comparison group could be included, it might be more convincing in interpreting the effectiveness of the online course. Secondly, with COVID-related restrictions being lifted, national education is now conducted online and offline, which would involve more face-to-face activities and teacher-student interactions. Therefore, students’ perceptions of teachers’ performance and class interactions may also be crucial attributes to the overall satisfaction rate of the program, which was not considered in the current study due to the online delivery mode. Thirdly, given the politically sensitive nature of national education at this stage, it is also crucial to understand the attitudes of various stakeholders, including teachers, students, and course designers, in different learning and teaching modes. Last but not least, this study adopted a quantitative approach with a questionnaire survey mostly involving Likert scale questions. Although an open-ended question was included to obtain subjective feedback from the participants, only some responded. Future studies should consider including a qualitative or mix-method approach to obtain more subjective views from students or a longitudinal design with several phases of investigation. In sum, with national education being continuously carried out across Hong Kong universities with growing diversity and coverage, the findings of this study should be constantly reviewed and replicated from various paradigmatic perspectives and with different methodologies.

Conclusions

This study underscored taught postgraduate students’ feedback on a self-paced online program related to national education and law-abiding leadership at a public university in Hong Kong. Findings based on 1,808 post-lecture subjective outcome evaluation forms indicated that most students had favorable learning experiences in the subject in terms of course attributes, understanding of national education and law-abiding behavior, and self-paced learning

arrangement, as well as the endorsement of the lecture benefits in helping them appreciate the significance of abiding by the law, social responsibility, and whole-person develop with problem-solving and critical thinking abilities. The program also helps them to better understand and adapt to the Hong Kong society and culture. These results replicated and validated prior findings obtained in face-to-face and hybrid learning mode (10,16,17) and added to the body of evidence supporting the value of national security education for the taught postgraduate students. Although this study has several limitations, it provides insight direction for future improvement of the subject course and self-paced and online learning mode.

Acknowledgments

The development and implementation of the National Security Program as well as this evaluation study were supported by The Hong Kong Polytechnic University (52UK and 52U9). The preparation of this paper is financially supported by Li and Fung Endowed Professorship, Wofoo Foundation (ZH2C) and Research Matching Fund of the Research Grants Council (ZECL).

References

1. Jung J. Learning experience and academic identity building by master's students in Hong Kong. *Stud High Educ* 2021;46(4):782-95.
2. Kember D, Ho A, Leung DYP. Evaluating taught postgraduate awards from the student's perspective. *J Furth High Educ* 2016;40(2):147-69.
3. The University Grants Committee. Commonly used statistical tables: Non-local student enrolment by university, level of Study, broad APC and mode of study (single year). URL: <https://cdcf.ugc.edu.hk/cdcf/searchStatSiteReport.action#>
4. Ladegaard HJ. The disquieting tension of 'the other': international students' experience of sojourn in Hong Kong. *J Multiling Multicult Dev* 2017;38(3):268-82.
5. Yu B, Zhang K. 'It's more foreign than a foreign country': Adaptation and experience of Mainland Chinese students in Hong Kong. *Tert Educ Manag* 2016;22(4):300-15.
6. Tran LT, Vu TTP. 'Responsibility in mobility': International students and social responsibility. *Glob Soc Educ* 2017;15(5):561-75.
7. Purbrick M. A report of the 2019 Hong Kong protests. *Asian Aff* 2019;50(4):465-87.
8. Shek DTL. Protests in Hong Kong (2019–2020): A perspective based on quality of life and well-being. *Appl Res Qual Life* 2020;15(3):619-35.
9. The Government of Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. The Law of the People's Republic of China on Safeguarding National Security in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region gazetted and takes immediate effect (with photos). URL: <https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202006/30/P2020063001015.htm>
10. Shek DTL, Dou D, Zhu X, Li X. Law abidance leadership education for university students in Hong Kong: Post-lecture evaluation. *Front Psychol* 2022a:6909.
11. Hong Kong e-Legislation. The Law of the People's Republic of China on Safeguarding National Security in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. URL: [https://www.elegislation.gov.hk/doc/hk/a406/eng_translation_\(a406\)_en.pdf](https://www.elegislation.gov.hk/doc/hk/a406/eng_translation_(a406)_en.pdf)
12. Hong Kong Baptist University. National Security Law Education (NSLE0001). URL: <https://sa.hkbu.edu.hk/ccl/nsle0001/national-security-law-education>
13. The Chinese University of Hong Kong. UGCP1001 Understanding China UGCP1002 Hong Kong in the wider constitutional order. URL: <http://ugcp1001-1002.oge.cuhk.edu.hk/index.php>

14. The University of Hong Kong. UG5E1001 Introduction to the Constitution, the Basic Law and the National Security Law. URL: <https://www.cedars.hku.hk/ge/ug5e1001.html>
15. The Hong Kong Polytechnic University. National Education. URL: [https://www.polyu.edu.hk/ous/docdrive/_sso/Undergraduate_Programmes_\(Four-Year_Degree_Curriculum\).pdf](https://www.polyu.edu.hk/ous/docdrive/_sso/Undergraduate_Programmes_(Four-Year_Degree_Curriculum).pdf)
16. Shek DTL, Zhu X, Dou D, Li X. National Security Law Education in Hong Kong: Qualitative evaluation based on the perspective of the students. *Int J Environ Res Public Health* 2023;20(1):553.
17. Shek DTL, Zhu X, Li X, Dou D. Satisfaction with hyflex teaching and law-abiding leadership education in Hong Kong university students under COVID-19. *Appl Res Qual Life* 2022b;17(5):2833-58.
18. Moss J, Hendry G. Use of electronic surveys in course evaluation. *Br J Educ Technol* 2002;33(5):583-92.
19. Denson N, Loveday T, Dalton H. Student evaluation of courses: What predicts satisfaction? *High Educ Res Dev* 2010;29(4):339-56.
20. Richardson JTE. Instruments for obtaining student feedback: a review of the literature. *Assess Eval High Educ* 2005;30(4):387-415.
21. Nulty DD. The adequacy of response rates to online and paper surveys: what can be done? *Assess Eval High Educ* 2008;33(3):301-14.
22. Hail HC. Patriotism abroad: Overseas Chinese students' encounters with criticisms of China. *J Stud Int Educ* 2015;19(4):311-26.
23. Zhu X, Shek DTL. Subjective outcome evaluation of a positive youth development program in mainland China. *Res Soc Work Pract* 2020;31(3):285-97.
24. Tullis JG, Benjamin AS. On the effectiveness of self-paced learning. *J Mem Lang* 2011;64(2):109-18.
25. Dumford AD, Miller AL. Online learning in higher education: Exploring advantages and disadvantages for engagement. *J Comput High Educ* 2018;30(3):452-65.
26. Elrod S. Quantitative reasoning: The next "across the curriculum" movement. *Peer Rev* 2014;16(3):4-8.
27. Aldulaimi SH, Abdeldayem MM, Keir MA, Al-Sanjary O. E-learning in higher education and COVID-19 outbreak: Challenges and opportunities. *Psychol Educ J* 2021;58(2):38-43.

Table 1. Descriptive results of students' perceptions of the course

Item	N	Mean	S.D.	1		2		3		4		5		6		Negative responses 1+2+3		Positive responses 4+5+6	
				N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1	1574	5.13	1.116	39	2.48	24	1.52	58	3.68	183	11.63	538	34.18	732	46.51	121	7.69	1453	92.31
2	1577	5.09	1.094	29	1.84	34	2.16	53	3.36	228	14.46	543	34.43	690	43.75	116	7.36	1461	92.64
3	1577	5.10	1.120	28	1.78	40	2.54	59	3.74	222	14.08	502	31.83	726	46.04	127	8.05	1450	91.95
4	1569	4.93	1.235	44	2.80	45	2.87	90	5.74	278	17.72	458	29.19	654	41.68	179	11.41	1390	88.59
5	1574	5.02	1.161	36	2.29	37	2.35	67	4.26	266	16.90	489	31.07	679	43.14	140	8.89	1434	91.11
6	1577	5.02	1.177	39	2.47	38	2.41	65	4.12	263	16.68	479	30.37	693	43.94	142	9.00	1435	91.00
7	1573	5.41	0.922	22	1.40	9	0.57	13	0.83	165	10.49	408	25.94	956	60.78	44	2.80	1529	97.20
8	1574	5.38	0.931	22	1.40	6	0.38	19	1.21	183	11.63	420	26.68	924	58.70	47	2.99	1527	97.01
9	1567	5.40	0.957	22	1.40	15	0.96	17	1.08	167	10.66	381	24.31	965	61.58	54	3.45	1513	96.55
10	1577	5.47	0.928	21	1.33	11	0.70	18	1.14	153	9.70	334	21.18	1040	65.95	50	3.17	1527	96.83
11	1569	5.44	0.890	19	1.21	7	0.45	11	0.70	162	10.33	396	25.24	974	62.08	37	2.36	1532	97.64
12	1578	5.40	0.962	22	1.39	15	0.95	22	1.39	164	10.39	382	24.21	973	61.66	59	3.74	1519	96.26
13	1575	5.35	0.973	24	1.52	13	0.83	24	1.52	175	11.11	425	26.98	914	58.03	61	3.87	1514	96.13
14	1573	5.60	0.761	12	0.76	4	0.25	5	0.32	108	6.87	318	20.22	1126	71.58	21	1.34	1552	98.66
15	1574	5.46	0.866	14	0.89	7	0.44	18	1.14	159	10.10	381	24.21	995	63.21	39	2.48	1535	97.52
16	1576	5.41	0.894	17	1.08	8	0.51	22	1.40	154	9.77	431	27.35	944	59.90	47	2.98	1529	97.02
17	1569	5.43	0.864	13	0.83	8	0.51	19	1.21	157	10.01	421	26.83	951	60.61	40	2.55	1529	97.45
18	1574	5.43	0.839	9	0.57	9	0.57	22	1.40	151	9.59	453	28.78	930	59.09	40	2.54	1534	97.46
19	1567	5.34	1.007	25	1.60	16	1.02	38	2.43	158	10.08	415	26.48	915	58.39	79	5.04	1488	94.96

Note. All items were rated on a 6-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Slightly Disagree; 4 = Slightly Agree; 5 = Agree; 6 = Strongly Agree)

Table 2. Number, mean, and standard deviation (SD) of age, gender, CA, UNEAB, SPL, and overall satisfaction

	N	Mean	SD
Age	1533	25.15	5.07
Gender	1569	0.08	1.00
SP	1599	9.31	0.82
CA	1604	8.92	1.06
UNE	1604	9.31	0.84
Overall satisfaction	1586	9.24	1.01

Table 3. Correlations between age, gender, SPL, CA, UNEAB, and overall satisfaction (item 19)

	Age	Gender	SP	CA	UNE
Age					
Gender	-.081**				
SP	-.180***	0.006			
CA	-.213***	0.003	.698***		
UNE	-.181***	0.025	.817***	.835***	
Overall satisfaction	-.182***	0.021	.792***	.833***	.880***

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). *** Correlation is significant at the 0.001 level (2-tailed).

Table 4. Multiple regression analyses

Model	Predictors	β	t	Cohen's f^2	R ² change	F change
1	Age	-0.183	-7.19***	0.034	0.034	26.26***
	Gender	0.009	0.36	0.000		
2	Age	0.005	0.44	0.000	0.791	2256.93***
	Gender	0.011	1	0.001		
	CA	0.321	16.27***	0.177		
	UNE	0.452	18.69***	0.234		
	SP	0.201	10.84***	0.079		

*** $p < 0.001$