

Int J Child Health Hum Dev 2022;15(1):00-00.

Running title: Law abidance leadership

Teachers' experience in law abidance leadership education: A qualitative study

Daniel TL Shek, PhD, FHKPS, BBS, SBS, JP¹, Xann Li, PhD¹, Diya Dou, PhD¹ and Xiaoqin Zhu, PhD¹

¹*Department of Applied Social Sciences, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong, PRChina*

Abstract: According to Article 10 of the “Law of the People's Republic of China on Safeguarding National Security in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR)” (also known as the “Hong Kong National Security Law”), universities have the responsibility to carry out national security education. In a public university in Hong Kong, we conducted the related education via a subject on Leadership and Intrapersonal Development (3-hour of face-to-face lecture and seven hours of self-study). To understand the views of the teachers on this program, we conducted a qualitative evaluation study to understand the experience of six teachers, including their initial reactions, preparation, teaching experience, responses of the students, benefits for students, challenges encountered, and professional teacher development as well as their own well-being. Results generally showed that the teachers had positive teaching experience and they perceived that the lecture was beneficial to the students.

Keywords: Qualitative evaluation, teacher perception, Hong Kong National Security Law, law abidance leadership, student development

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

Submitted: April 22, 2022. **Revised:** May 10, 2022. **Accepted:** May 21, 2022.

Introduction

In February 2019, the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region proposed a bill entitled “The Fugitive Offenders and Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters Legislation (Amendment) Bill 2019”. In this bill, there is an expansion of mechanisms to transfer fugitives to Taiwan, China and Macau. As the proposed bill is politically very sensitive, it triggered much public opposition from different sectors of Hong Kong. Although the SAR Government announced suspension of the proposed bill on 15 June 2019 and formally withdrew the bill on 23 October 2019, protests did not stop and the initial peaceful demonstrations gradually escalated. The escalated activities included widespread vandalism, massive obstruction of roads, and occupation of universities in Hong Kong in November 2019, including the Chinese University of Hong

Kong and the Hong Kong Polytechnic University (1). These unfortunate developments created much social and political instability in Hong Kong. To help Hong Kong restore law and order and to strengthen national security in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, the National People's Congress made "The Decision of the National People's Congress on Establishing and Improving the Legal System and Enforcement Mechanisms for the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region to Safeguard National Security" on 28 May 2020. Authorized by the National People's Congress, the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress passed the "Law of the People's Republic of China on Safeguarding National Security in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR)" on 30 June 2020. This is also known as the "Hong Kong National Security Law (or NSL)".

According to Article 10 of the Hong Kong Security Law, "the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall promote national security education in schools and universities and through social organisations, the media, the internet and other means to raise the awareness of Hong Kong residents of national security and of the obligation to abide by the law". According to this requirement, universities have the obligation to provide national security education to students. As a public university in Hong Kong, we have developed a NSL education program with a 3-hour of face-to-face lecture and 7 hours of self-study. In the 3-hour of face to face lecture, we cover the concepts of law abidance leadership, brief coverage of the history of modern China (Century of Humiliation), the Constitution, the Basic Law, concept of national security and the Hong Kong National Security Law. To help students understand the subject matter, we also developed and distributed 60 lecture notes to facilitate their learning.

To understand the responses of the students to law abidance leadership and NSL education, we conducted post-lecture evaluation in Semester 1 and Semester 2 of 2022-23 academic years (2). In the first Semester, 1,146 students took the subject and 890 responded to the post-lecture evaluation form (i.e., 77.7%). Results showed that most of the students appreciated the content, design, process and teacher of the lecture. Besides, most students appreciated the knowledge on law abidance, law abidance leadership, national security, and the Hong Kong National Security Law. Most importantly, the students indicated that they would tried their best to be a law-abiding citizen and law-abiding leader. Similar observations emerged from the qualitative comments of the students. Some examples included: "I have learned different types of crimes and I didn't know that a lot of countries have implemented NSL. Through this lecture, I have learned and gained deeper knowledge about laws"; "Through this lesson, I learnt more about the importance of obeying the law for ensuring the social stability in society".

We conducted post-lecture evaluation in the second Semester of 2021/22 academic year (1,312 students took the subject and 914 students responded). For the quantitative findings, we found that feedback of the students was positive, with appreciation of the lecture (content and benefits), teacher and appreciation of law abidance leadership (3). For example, 95% and 95% of the students responded positively to "I will try my best to serve as a law-abiding citizen" and "I will try my best to serve as a socially responsible leader", respectively. The qualitative comments also showed similar findings. For examples, students indicated that they learned about law abidance ("law is close to us, and a full and objective understanding of the law is important for the development of both individuals and society") and the Hong Kong National Security Law

("Before this lecture, I have limited knowledge on NSL. But this lecture does help me to know more about NSL in Hong Kong like the term "subversion").

While it is desirable to understand the views of the students on law abidance and NSL education, it is equally important to understand the views and experience of the teachers. Shek and Ma (4) argued that there are four reasons why researchers should study the responses of teachers. First, teachers as program implementers are important stakeholders. Second, as teachers are more experienced, they may have more accurate perceptions of the program effectiveness than program participants such as students. Third, collecting evaluation data from teachers would promote their reflective practice. Finally, collection of evaluation data from program implementers can help to give a sense of fairness and the related data can triangulate with evaluation data from other sources. Unfortunately, despite the importance of understanding the views of program implementers, most of the evaluation findings focus on student perceptions instead of teacher perceptions. To offer an additional perspective on the perceived effectiveness of education on law abidance leadership, we examined the views of the teachers in this study.

Methods

Eight teachers taught the law abidance leadership lecture in Semester 1 of 2021-22 academic year. The 3-hour lecture was part of a 3-credit course on Leadership and Intrapersonal development. Besides the lecture, students were required to have 7 hours of self-study and take an assessment.

After teaching the 3-hour lecture on law abidance leadership, we invited the teachers to join a qualitative study where they responded to several open-ended questions about the lecture and related arrangements in a voluntary and anonymous manner. Eventually, six teachers joined the study. We invited the teachers to respond to the following questions:

1. What did you feel when you knew that you had to teach a lecture on NSL?
2. How did you prepare for this lecture?
3. What were your experiences when you teach this lecture? Any positive and negative experiences?
4. What were the responses of the students?
5. Did the students benefit from the lecture?
6. What were the major challenges when you teach this lecture?
7. How would you comment on your development and well-being as a teacher in teaching NSL education?

Results

For each question, we analyzed the written responses of the teachers and categorized them into different themes. To substantiate the themes, we present the related written responses (5,6).

Initial feelings when knowing the teaching assignment

Colleagues generally had negative emotions when they knew that they had to teach a 3-hour lecture on law abidance leadership and the Hong Kong National Security Law.

These negative emotions included surprise, uncomfortable feelings, mixed feelings, panic feeling, anxiety as well as nervousness. The narratives are as follows:

- *Surprise*
 - “As a Hong Kong citizen, I become more aware of my obligations and rights with the enforcement of NSL. However, I never anticipated before that I will be one of the teachers who are responsible for teaching this topic.”
- *Uncomfortable feeling*
 - “I felt a bit uncomfortable because I believe that the majority of students do not accept NSL. I thought most of them have their own political views and the content of this lecture may arouse their emotions. They may give negative comments and feedback.”
 - “I experienced the hard preparation of teaching and mock teaching of the lecture.”
- *Mixed feelings*
 - “I had mixed feelings about teaching this lecture ... As a citizen, it has not been easy for me to watch the news and witness the conflicts between pro-democracy and post-government groups ... Not only I did not want to recall the political incidents that took place in that period, but I also worried the teaching materials and discussion might provoke students’ emotions.”
 - “I totally agreed that the education could be helpful for eliminating some misunderstanding and enhancing their awareness towards national security. On the other hand, honestly, I have foreseen the challenges in front of me.”
- *Panic feeling*
 - “I was a bit panic ... because NSL is a very sensitive topic in nowadays Hong Kong society. I worried that students will be quite critical ... they may ask my views on some political issues”.
- *Anxiety and nervousness*
 - “I was even overwhelmed by the anxious feeling for the first several weeks. I understood that it would be a huge challenge for me ... I regarded this topic as a serious and challenging one and teaching this topic would also catches the attention of media and the public. Moreover, I was wondering what the students’ responses will be? Will I survive from the public opinions? I even imagined that I would be a hot discussion topic in some students’ forums.”
 - “I didn’t have enough knowledge to address students’ queries ... I was a bit nervous when I knew that I had to teach a lecture on NSL.”
 - “Several days before the mock teaching, I felt very nervous and even had no appetite.”
 - “After what happened in our society in the past two years, knowing that our team needed to teach a lecture in NSL was somewhat stressful.”
 - “I had been feeling extremely anxious about teaching this lecture. Knowledge-wise, I felt inadequate, as I am not familiar with the law, modern Chinese history, and the philosophy discussed in Lecture 8.”

- “At first, my feeling is a bit stressful and confused and I struggled with national security education. I felt this way because of how challenging it is for me to understand the expectations from PolyU and Hong Kong Government. In addition, lacking of familiarity with the law and content knowledge is another concern. As a legal layman, I am not confident enough to teach related law and content, that’s why I felt anxious.”

Lecture preparation

The findings showed that teachers prepared the lecture through a variety of methods. These included:

- *Overcoming anxiety feelings*
 - “Although I was anxious, I knew that I must do this right. After I conquered the anxious feeling, I felt even proud of myself having this opportunity to teach this topic. NSL is essential for safeguarding the security and stability of Hong Kong. Therefore, instead of imagining the worst scenario, I decided to plan for this teaching topic actively.”
 - “Preparing for the worst and planning for the best was the best strategy right now.”
- *Thorough study of the lecture material*
 - “To prepare myself, I read the PowerPoint slides provided by my colleagues so that I have some basic understanding about what is NSL and the rationale behind to implement NSL in Hong Kong.”
 - “I started to prepare this lecture and my teaching early and spent a lot of time in it. Particularly, I studied each slide of the PPTs carefully to ensure I understand and master the knowledge and content in a deeper level. After 2 to 3 rounds of the study of the PPTs, I gradually built up my confidence in delivering this lecture.”
 - “More importantly, Professor S. provided us with a list of Q&As regarding this topic, they were extremely useful for me to prepare some challenging questions. I decided to make myself familiar with the Q&As afterwards.”
 - “Specifically, back to NSL lecture, to make myself familiar with the contents, I spent nearly two days to polish the slides and made them handy for me. I would always like to add some pictures and reduce the number of words in the slides.”
 - “I decided to comprehend and memorize the chapters and contents intensively. To tell the truth, memorizing the items helped me a lot in the real time teaching. Although I was a little nervous in class, I could deliver the contents with confident and without hesitation.”
- *Enrich one’s knowledge about the related issues*
 - “I searched online and see if there are some international cases that I can share with students. I believed that providing some non-local news to

students are much easier for students to understand the concepts. After they comprehend the concepts, we could discuss some local news with students and they could be more familiarized with the teaching contents. It helped facilitate the discussions after students understand the materials”.

- *Locate useful teaching aids*
 - “I also searched for some interesting videos that are related to the teaching contents and tried to provide some interesting activities for students. As most of the information is quite factual, students would like teachers to use different means or tools to disseminate the key messages of the teaching content.”
 - “Apart from the contents on the website, I also searched a lot of information from discussion forums and news regarding this topic.”
- *Design activities appropriate for hybrid teaching*
 - “I tried to ask students to share their ideas with the class by using Menti. Also, through Kahoot, I could invite all students to participate in the game and verified that do they understand the concepts or not. In addition, I tried to rearrange and organize the PowerPoint slides so that students could comprehend the content easily.”
 - “Personalize teaching plan such as using specific learning activities.”
- *Physical and mental rehearsals*
 - “To prepare for the first lesson, I kept having rehearsal at home from 10pm to 3am. Then, have around 3 hours sleeping and then woke up to refresh my body. I know that this is important to get my body ready for teaching a new topic, I did some stretching and ate a full breakfast to charge up.”
 - “In addition to understand different perspectives, I began to practice the teaching materials when I received the official version from the department.”
- *Having adequate preparation*
 - “Specifically, I spent another two days to practice by myself before mock teaching. After the preparation period, I gathered more confidence regarding teaching this topic.”
 - “Double check the teaching materials uploaded in the Blackboard Collaborate ... arrived in the lecture hall around 8:10am to set-up in advance as usual.... After a final testing of the camera and sound system, students came and I went to greet them and to have some casual chat to warm up.”
- *Mock teaching*
 - “During the mock teaching, the other colleagues’ teaching style, approach, and interpretation of the content inspired me a lot on how to design and deliver the lecture better no matter on designing the PPTs or on engaging and interacting with students.”
 - “The mock teaching helped me understand and evaluate my own teaching based on the feedbacks of the colleagues. This helped me to understand whether my design in certain parts of the lecture is workable or not,

- whether my way to interact with students is appropriate or not, and whether I could explain the knowledge clearly and confidently to students.”
- “My mock teaching reminded me that I need to control my pace in face-to-face teaching. Instead of making this lecture to be my own presentation, I must bear in mind that interactions with the students were essential during every lecture. Therefore, mock teaching was extremely helpful. I like this arrangement!”

Teaching experiences

Generally speaking, teachers shared that the teaching experience was smooth and positive, although they also highlighted some negative experience such as difficulty in motivating the students to participate. Some narratives are as follows:

- *Smooth teaching*
 - “The generally smooth teaching might be due to ... the efforts made in teaching preparation.”
 - “Both classes went smoothly and the overall atmosphere were positive.”
 - “My teaching of this lecture was smooth. ... I successfully finished all the parts of the lecture on time and based on the schedule...”
 - “Both lectures ran smoothly than I expected.”
 - “All in all, the atmosphere of both lectures was peaceful and smooth. I did not get any radical responses or sharing from the students.
- *Positive experience*
 - “For positive experience, I spotted that students understand the importance of obeying the law.”
 - “All in all, my experiences were positive in teaching Lecture 8, yet, better practice in time management should be strengthened.”
 - “In some lectures, I utilized some polling, games, quiz and climbing exercises. I also prepared little gifts for the participants. The students liked these games.”
 - “I was fluent in elaborating the knowledge points and content of the lecture.”
 - I noticed that some of them had good understanding of the history, and they could give me some examples of social instability worldwide. Additionally, they were able to talk about the concepts of social orders, Chinese history, morality, law abiding, and security, I was really impressed and encouraged by them. The sharing and involvement from students also encouraged me to keep on teaching confidently.”
- *Negative experience*
 - “My anxiety certainly has affected my teaching performance negatively. I noticed the pace of my speech was a lot faster than usual; I made less eye contact with my students, and the lecture was much less interactive than usual due to my anxiety. It was not ideal.”
 - “I would explore new ways and add more interactive games and activities in lectures in the future. However, one game would consume at least 10-15

minutes with debriefing, it would be hard to deliver the following contents in schedule. I was also faced with this dilemma here.”

Responses of the students

- *Positive responses*
 - “No challenging questions were received and students are cooperative and responsive.”
 - “I have prepared some interactive games and activities and students have keen participation.”
 - “Some of the students mentioned that they enjoyed the games and activities so that they have more interactions with classmates and teachers. These pedagogies can help students learn effectively.
 - “Students were generally active in class participation and interaction, particularly for those students sitting in the classroom.”
 - “Students from mainland China welcomed the lecture more, comparatively speaking.”
- *Negative responses*
 - “Some students were not ready or open-minded in accepting the teaching content ... Some students were passive. This helped me to understand that students are discontented and they are unwilling to be attentive in class.”
 - “A number of local students who frequently engaged in the previous lectures had chosen to be quiet and inactive in this lecture. Having discussed with them after class, they expressed that they have very negative impression towards NSL in HK and they have no interests on the topic, therefore they chose to be silent in the lecture throughout.”
 - “The students in the two classes were relatively silent compared to the previous lectures ... most of them were not involved in group discussion in the beginning. They had hesitation to talk about their opinions. Then I chose to walk around the classroom, approached every single student and invited them to answer the questions. After that, most of students in the classroom were involved in the discussion.”
 - “I guessed that they were worried about other students’ response, so they chose to not to say anything during lectures.”

Benefits to students

All teachers indicated that the lecture was helpful to students in promoting their understanding of law abidance, law abidance leadership, national security and the Hong Kong National Security Law.

- “The students mainly considered that the activities conducted helped them in understanding and enjoying the lecture.”
- “Students understood NSL is to maintain the social order ... they are more familiarized with the content of NSL and they understood why we need NSL in Hong Kong ... understand the reason that why we need to conduct this lecture about NSL.”

- “From their sharing and class participation, I thought most students benefited from this lecture, as they were eager to learn and develop the understanding this topic.”
- “I was so glad to see that some students also expressed their feelings in the post-class evaluation questionnaire, and they were generally positive towards this topic.”
- “I believe the theories and concepts included in the lecture had stimulated students’ thinking and helped them understand the importance of sustaining political and economic stability in Hong Kong, especially after what happened in our society in 2019 and 2020.”
- “It is perceived that students benefited from this lecture. Basically, all students got the chances to know more about NSL and understand the offences covered in NSL. A number of students found the lecture educational and meaningful. Some students also reflected that they had reviewed the quality of law-abidance from a new perspective.”
- “By receiving useful materials and acquiring new knowledge, students claimed that some misconceptions towards NSL were somehow eliminated. In addition, this lecture let them know the importance of national security and some students admitted that they are willing to shoulder up their civil responsibilities after attending the lecture.”

Major challenges encountered

From the narratives, we realized that the teachers encountered several challenges. These included appropriate allocation of time for the different parts of the lecture, management of two groups of students simultaneously (face-to face and online modes under Hybrid learning), engaging the students, the need to have more real-life applications, and ways to promote student interest and motivation to learn. Some examples are illustrated below:

- *Student engagement*
 - “In previous lectures, online students would turn on their mics and share their views. For the lecture of NSL, some students are quite worried that their answers will be recorded and they are unwilling to share their views in class.”
 - “How to engage students as many local students might hold negative feelings towards this lecture due to their political stand. I found that two areas might help. The first area might be the first half of the lecture on “Law-abiding Leadership” which actually functions as a foundation for the teaching of National Security Law in the second half of the lecture. After the first half of the lecture, some students would be more receptive to the NSL ...Second, for teaching the second half of the lecture on NSL, we should focus more on the facts instead of adding a lot of personal viewpoints and interpretation. The focus should be to equip students with important facts and information about NSL. I remembered that after the teaching of one class, I asked my student assistant what he feel about my teaching. He said one good thing in my teaching was that I was “objective” in teaching NSL without instilling my personal views.”

- *Making links to the discipline of the students*
 - “It is quite challenging to find some relevant materials related to their discipline. ... in other faculties, such as hospitality, it is difficult to find evidence to show how it is directly related to their professionalism.”

Teacher development and well-being

Although the teachers initially experienced negative emotions about teaching this lecture, they highlighted that they gained positive development in the process. We present some positive experiences below:

- *Precious experience*
 - “It is a very precious experience for my personal development in teaching. I recognized that it is not difficult in teaching something new to the students. To maintain the best teaching quality, it is important to keep in mind that what our standpoint is when we deliver the message to the students. Also, it is essential for me to understand and clarify what is my goals in that lesson.”
- *Use of different teaching styles*
 - “I learnt to execute different teaching styles when I am facing different kind of students. For example, when I am teaching some students, I understand that they are quite flexible in answering the questions. In contrast, when I teach other students, I need to slow down my pace and repeat the questions again before I invited some students share his/her answer.”
- *Feeling honored*
 - “Honestly, I felt so honored right now because I was involved in the teaching team, as a teacher as well as a Hong Kong citizen. Moreover, since some concepts were related to the previous lectures, such as self-leadership, morality, and spirituality, it was good to recap the concepts and make some linkage with these lectures. And I was happy that I was able to recall the memory of the students regarding the previous topics. Again, some interactive or interesting games could be promoted in this lecture.”
- *Benefits from the experience*
 - “For me as a teacher, I also benefited a lot from the preparation and teaching.”
 - “My experience of teaching the topic of NSL was positive, and I benefited a lot from the preparation, teaching, and reflection. It motivated me to be well-prepared to be a good teacher.”
 - “I have gathered more strengths and confidence after teaching this topic.”
 - “The concepts of national security helped me to reflect and understand social issues from a much wider angle. In the past, I have not given much thought to concepts such as law-abidance and the importance of stability; I realized these are indeed important elements if one were to lead a big team, to manage a company, or even a country.”

- “In terms of professional development, this experience helped me see my weaknesses and pushed me to reflect on my professionalism as an educator.”
- *Feeling grateful*
 - “Many thanks to the support of team members and Professor S”.
 - “I want to thank Professor Shek for the opportunity to teach this lecture. Your guidance and support throughout the preparation process, including the mock teaching, the Q&A documents, and the informative teaching materials prepared by you and our colleagues, are greatly appreciated.”
- *Ways to improve teaching*
 - “The first area is still the teaching preparation. While I have started the preparation in an early time, I could do better to devote more time and efforts in this lecture. Also, I need to learn and further improve in time management, planning, and determination. A better planning and a stronger determination could allow me to have more time devoted in preparing this lecture and gain better results. The second area for improvement is that I need to be more confident in teaching and in interacting with students. This also requires the accumulation of experience. I need to continue to practice, reflect, and learn how to build relationship with students in and outside of the classroom to facilitate students’ participation in this lecture.”
 - “There are some successful measures that I can observe in my teaching. First, fluency of the content is essential. This is to demonstrate the very good understanding of the content to be taught. Second, the clear understanding of the linkage of the reasons to follow the law (i.e., law-abiding leadership) and the NSL is crucial to formulate a reasonable ground to learn about NSL. Third, in order to keep good time management, teachers may point out the key ideas of the concepts and keep reminding students about the concepts by linking them up one by one along the way. Fourth, this is important to start with pointing out our aims of NSL teaching in the second half of the lecture is to let them understand the NSL and legal consequences but at the same time we show our respect to their choices. Fifth, I asked one non-local English-speaking student in each of the lesson respectively about their views on national security in the beginning of this section. Both of them said that national security is important in their countries, which can help showing some other voices from other countries to have a smooth start. Sixth, I think that the personal belief of teachers about national security and NSL is highly important. My personal belief indeed was constructed by three incidents of my life. First, when I was in primary school, my father already brought me to the City Hall to attend lectures about politics on Sundays. This expanded my horizon of the world even though I was only eight years old. Second, I am the generation witness the change of governance from British to mainland China. This first-hand experience can allow me to compare the differences and similarities between the two powers. Third, as I went to study overseas after high school, I have the experience to live in a Western

society which can provide me some insights about the cultural differences and to learn about discrimination overseas.”

- *Deep reflection*
 - “After the first lecture, I spent a whole night reflecting on my own emotions and behaviours. I realized my subjective feelings and assumption had reduced the opportunity for my students to think, share, and learn. First of all, just because I found the social movement emotionally provoking does not mean all the students felt the same. Secondly, even the materials can potentially be emotionally provoking to some individuals; this lecture allows us to learn more relevant concepts and theories and see things from different angles. Although I was cognitively aware of the benefit of this lecture, my behaviours were still affected by my fear and anxiety.”
 - “To become a teaching professional, I shall always remind myself to make decisions in students’ best interests. Constantly reflecting on my own emotions and values is a must so I would not let them affect my teaching. I shall also remind myself that our lecture is not to take any political stands but to provide a platform that stimulates students’ thinking, encourage open discussion, and promote inter-group empathy.”
 - “In our course, we teach our students how to become a good leader who is willing to listen, show care to others, accept the opinion of others, and be transparent while upholding the ethical practice ... When a follower disagrees or misbehave, a good leader would listen, understand, communicate, and try to find a solution with mutual agreement.”
 - “Teaching NSL is challenging but meaningful. First, this is a pioneer teaching in Hong Kong about NSL in university level, in which there has no clues or hints from past experiences or literature. Second, this is meaningful to teach the next generation about this law, especially from the historical perspective.”
 - “I developed some of my own insights and understanding regarding this lecture. My teaching philosophy is that I could deliver the true and deep knowledge to the students. ... While the mock teaching was very challenging, it helped me improve a lot through peer learning, feedback, and motivation, and through practicing my teaching.”

Discussion

Although effort to understand student responses’ to teaching and learning is widespread in education, related data based on teachers are sparse. In addition, there are not many studies examining perceived effectiveness of national security and law abidance leadership education. Based on the written responses of six teachers, we have several conclusions. First, when the teachers knew that they had to teach a lecture on the Hong Kong National Security Law, they generally showed negative emotions, such as ambivalence, anxiety and nervousness. Second, colleagues used different means to prepare for this lecture. Third, teachers generally felt that the teaching experience was smooth and they delivered the lecture well. Fourth, both positive and negative responses of the students were mentioned. In particular, teachers found that some students were

hesitant to express their views during class. Fifth, the teachers perceived that the students benefitted from the lecture, particularly their understanding of law abidance leadership and the NSL. Sixth, the teachers highlighted several challenges in teaching this lecture, particularly how to engage the students in the discussion of this sensitive topic. Finally, despite their initial negative experience, teachers felt that the teaching helps to promote their professional development and well-being. The present findings are generally consistent with the post-lecture evaluation findings based on the feedback of the students. From a triangulation point of view, the findings based on different stakeholders underscored the positive perceptions of both students and teachers using different methods (post-lecture evaluation versus qualitative written responses).

As mentioned above, compared to students, there are relatively fewer studies on the perceptions of teachers in education evaluation studies (7-11). In the context of law abidance leadership and national security education, there are several reasons why we should understand the views of teachers. First, as teacher is a major stakeholder responsible for teaching, they should be engaged in evaluation. Without their involvement, the evaluation picture would be incomplete. Second, as national security education is a very sensitive topic, there is a need to thoroughly understand the views of different stakeholders. Third, as the Hong Kong National Security Law is new to Hong Kong, teaching NSL would constitute a big challenge for teachers. Fourth, as young people have negative feelings about China (12), we have to understand their views on national security education, which is felt by some young people as “imposed” on Hong Kong by the Beijing Government. Fifth, as the teachers may be emotionally influenced by the “Social Event”, we have to understand their teaching experience. Sixth, understanding the teaching experience of the teachers can help us develop appropriate training for them (13,14), such as reduction of their negative experience and promotion of their positive experience in teaching law abidance leadership. Finally, understanding the views of teachers can help to provide an alternative perspective on program evaluation, which can help to triangulate findings based on different sources. There are views suggesting that there is a crisis of replication in social sciences and education (15).

While the present study is pioneering in Hong Kong, there are several limitations. First, only six teachers joined this study. It would be helpful if we could recruit all teachers to join the study. Second, besides asking teachers to write their answers in an anonymous manner, we can add survey items to get some quantitative data. It is noteworthy that objective outcome evaluation is still the mainstream evaluation approach (16-18). Third, individual interviews may help to generate more elaborative data regarding the teaching experience of the teachers. In particular, we should gain more understanding of the professional development and well-being of the teachers in teaching law abidance leadership. Fourth, we should further explore the challenges faced by the teachers, such as why some students were not willing to join the discussion during class. The use of case study (19) may be helpful here. Fifth, we should further explore the effectiveness of law abidance leadership education under COVID-19 because different teaching and learning modes are utilized under the pandemic (20-22). Despite these limitations and in conjunction with evaluation findings based on students (2,3), there is evidence showing that law abidance leadership and NSL education in the university under focus is well-received by a majority of the students taking the program and there are perceived benefits based on law abidance leadership education.

Acknowledgments

The preparation of this paper is financially supported by Wofoo Foundation and Li and Fung Endowed Professorship in Service Leadership Education.

References

1. Shek DTL. Protests in Hong Kong (2019–2020): A perspective based on quality of life and well-being. *Appl Res Qual Life* 2020;15:619-35.
2. Shek DTL, Zhu XQ, Li X, Dou DY. Satisfaction with HyFlex teaching and law-abiding leadership education in Hong Kong university students under COVID-19. *Appl Res Qual Life* 2022 Feb 21. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11482-022-10040-4>.
3. Shek DTL, Zhu XQ, Li, X, Dou DY. Law abidance leadership education for university students in Hong Kong: Post-lecture evaluation. Manuscript submitted for publication.
4. Shek DTL, Ma CMS. Program implementers' evaluation of the Project P.A.T.H.S.: Findings based on different datasets over time. *ScientificWorldJournal* 2012;2012:918437.
5. Shek DTL, Zhu X, Leung JTY, Lee TY, Wu FKY. Evaluation of the Project P.A.T.H.S. in Mainland China: Findings based on student diaries. *Res Soc Work Pract* 2019;29(4):410–9.
6. Shek DTL, Han XY, Lee TY, Yu L. Subjective outcome evaluation of a positive youth development program in China. *Int J Disabil Hum Dev* 2014;13(2):275–83.
7. Shek DTL, Ma CMS, Zhu X. Evaluation of a community-based positive youth development program in Hong Kong: Views of program implementers. *Int J Disabil Hum Dev* 2017;16(4):377-85.
8. Shek DT L, Leung JTY, Ma CMS, Wu J. Subjective outcome evaluation of the community-based P.A.T.H.S. Project: Views of program implementers. *Int J Disabil Hum Dev* 2017;16(4):395-405.
9. Shek DTL, Wu FKY, Chen MT. Evaluation of the Project P.A.T.H.S. in mainland China: Views of the program implementers in senior high schools. *Int Public Health J* 2018;10(1):81-90.
10. Shek DTL, Zhu X, Leung JTY. Evaluation findings of Tin Ka Ping P. A. T. H. S. Project implemented in junior secondary schools: Implementers' views. *Int J Child Adolesc Health* 2018;11(1):99-108.
11. 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.
12. Shek DTL, Lee BM, Dou D, Chu KMC, Zhu Z, Sun PCF. Perceptions of social institutions amongst Chinese adolescents in Hong Kong. *Int J Child Adolesc Health* 2021;14(1):63-72.
13. Shek DTL, Wai CL. Training workers implementing adolescent prevention and positive youth development programs: What have we learned from the literature? *Adolescence* 2008;43(172):823–45.
14. Shek DTL, Chung CK, Sun, RCF. Evaluation of a training program of the Tin Ka Ping P.A.T.H.S. Project in mainland China. *Int J Child Adolesc Health* 2017; 10(2):177–87.

15. Makel MC, Plucker JA, Hegarty B. Replications in Psychology research: How often do they really occur? *Perspect Psychol Sci* 2012;7:537-42. doi:10.1177/1745691612460688.
16. Shek DTL, Zhu X. Promotion of thriving among Hong Kong Chinese adolescents: Evidence from eight-wave data. *Res Soc Work Pract* 2020;30(8):870–83.
17. Zhu X, Shek DTL. Impact of a positive youth development program on junior high school students in mainland China: A pioneer study. *Children Youth Serv Rev* 2020;114:105022.
18. Shek DTL, Yu L, Sun RCF, Lee TY, Han XY, Li XX, Zhao X. Objective outcome evaluation of a positive youth development program in China. *Int J Disabil Hum Dev* 2014;13(2):255–65.
19. Shek DTL, Sun, RCF. Implementation quality of a positive youth development program: Cross-case analyses based on seven cases in Hong Kong. *ScientificWorldJournal* 2008;8:075-87.
20. Shek DTL. COVID-19 and quality of life: Twelve reflections. *Appl Res Qual Life* 2021;16(1):1-11.
21. Lin L, Shek DTL. Meaning-in-life profiles among Chinese late adolescents: associations with readiness for political participation. *Int J Environ Res Public Health* 2021;18(11): 5765. <https://doi.org/doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18115765>.
22. Leung H, Shek DTL, Dou D. Evaluation of service-learning in Project WeCan under COVID-19 in a Chinese context. *Int J Environ Res Public Health* 2021;18(7): 3596. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18073596>.