

Students' self-perception of their Sustainability Consciousness resulted from Hong Kong's Liberal Education curricula

Rationale

Analyzing influences of Hong Kong liberal education curricula on secondary school graduates, enrolled in public tertiary institutions, with a specific focus on students' self-perceived sustainability consciousness is crucially important to (a) supporting the EdB strategic goal of creating a continues structure of Hong Kong liberal education (b) advancing implementation of liberal education from secondary to tertiary levels of Hong Kong's education system and evolvement of sustainability education as its core element.

Background

Stemming from a long tradition of liberal education in Hong Kong, General Education (GE) courses and programs together with the recently implemented compulsory 2009 New Senior Secondary Liberal Studies (NSS LS) curriculum, represent a continues and sustainable structure of liberal education in the city. Although thousands of young Hongkongers participate in liberal studies courses and programs through secondary and tertiary levels of education, the influence of this structure of liberal education on their mindset remains unclear.

Objectives

Develop expertise and Hong Kong liberal education structure and its transformative impacts through:

- Examining the self-perceptions of Hong Kong secondary school graduates enrolled in General Education programs in tertiary institutions about their sustainability consciousness resulting from the continues liberal education curricula;
- Providing first-hand data about a sustainability module of the curricula and its ability to influence students' values, beliefs, and goals;
- Identifying strategies to improve teaching for transformative learning in GE & NSS LS courses.

Theoretical grounding

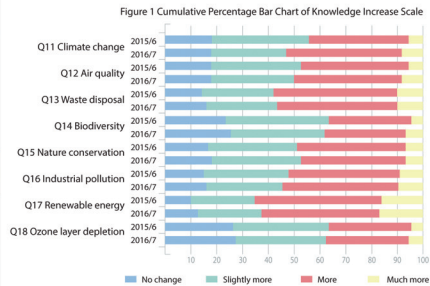
The study relies on the use of two theoretical perspectives, based on Bateson's (1973) transformative learning model and Harvey's (1976) conceptualizations of global awareness [3,4].

Methodological scope

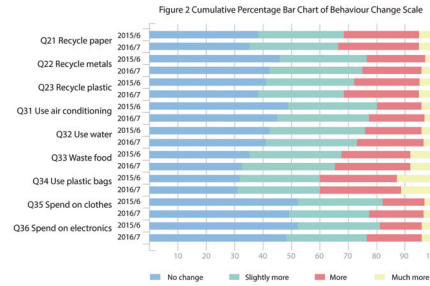
Within a mix-method research design framework, the researchers conducted ~5000 questionnaires and collected 989 reflective narratives of first year students of eight universities in Hong Kong, who were enrolled in General Education courses.

Quantitative results

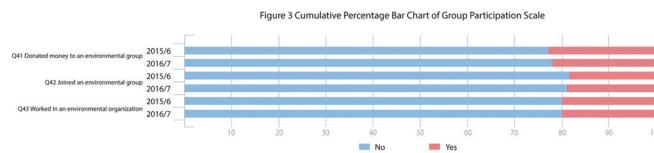
Sustainability consciousness of Hong Kong students



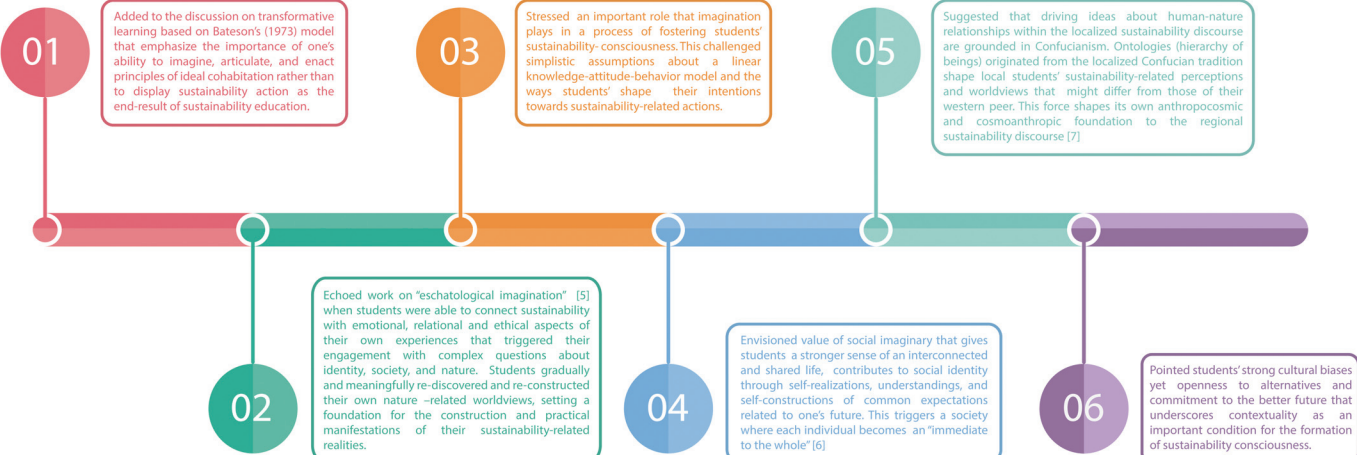
Quantitative results revealed an increase in the self-perceived knowledge and behavioral aspects of the sustainability consciousness of Hong Kong students. These might be attributed to their immersion in compulsory sustainability education modules within liberal studies programs in secondary through tertiary education. At the same time, students' self-reported engagement in sustainability-related civic, campus, or action groups remained low.



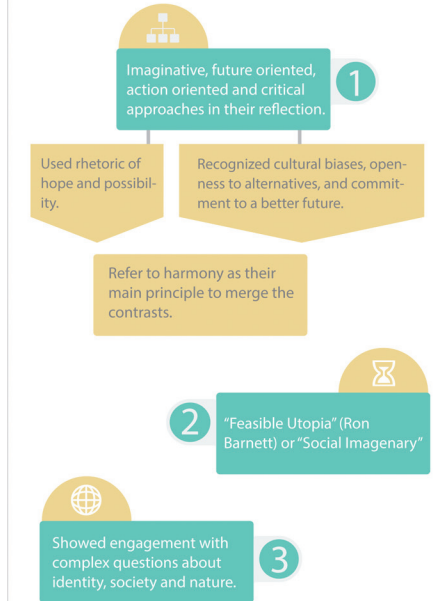
Qualitative analysis of students' reflective narratives revealed that beneath these visible or self-declared behavior and knowledge changes, lies imaginative, future oriented, and critical approaches to describing and analyzing their views on their identities, nature, and their notion of social, environmental, and economic sustainability.



Discussion & Conclusions



Qualitative results



References

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