Background and Objectives

Amid the 2019 social movement, Hong Kong has been undergoing unprecedented escalation of confrontations. The anger, tension, and violence are ubiquitous among groups with conflicting political stance.

Particularly, some individuals experienced emotional agitation, whereas some displayed positive affect toward the movement.

The current study aimed to investigate factors that influence emotional responses during this period and to identify possible ways to promote hopefulness and social reconciliation among youth.

Methods

A set of questionnaires developed by a multidisciplinary team was administered online to assess tertiary students’ socio-demographics and perceptions of intrapersonal, interpersonal, community and societal factors before, during and after the movement.

Descriptive statistics, multiple regression, moderation analysis, as well as path analysis were performed to summarize respondents’ characteristics and test our hypotheses.

Results

Interaction effect of family relationship during the movement and living in dormitory was significant after adjusting for socio-demographics (B = -10.54, p = 0.021). Improved family relationship was associated with higher hopefulness for future of Hong Kong, especially among students who occasionally lived at home.

Resilience protected against negative affect (B = -0.19, p < .001) and poor mental health (B = 0.14, p < .001).

Both strong and negative affect would promote protest participation, whereas only the former one would enhance prosociality and foster eagerness to help Hong Kong restore peace, harmony and prosperity. There were gender difference in the pathway from positive affect to protect participation through prosocial behavior.

Conclusion

The current study increases our understanding of the factors that promote social reconciliation in Hong Kong.

Further studies are needed to examine the mechanism underlying different emotional and behavioural responses in local secondary students during this period.