



香港教育大學
The Education University
of Hong Kong



Research Brief

EPL IMPACT

Presented by

Dr Haiyan Qian

**Shanghai Expert Teachers:
Learners First, Leader Second**



hqian@eduhk.hk



www.eduhk.hk/epl



Faculty of Education
and Human Development
教育及人類發展學院



Department of Education Policy
and Leadership
教育政策與領導學系



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Introduction

In recent years, there has been increased interest in Shanghai school education due to the city's high ranking performance in the global Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). This interest has centred around what Shanghai schools and teachers are doing differently to other education systems within China and beyond. Shanghai's unique teacher learning system recognises, differentiates and labels teacher expertise at multiple mastery levels. China has relied upon its successful "expert" teachers who are granted titles such as subject leaders, special-class teachers or teaching-research officers to drive effective teacher learning. In the past, they were only formally recognised as being expert teachers in their own school but now, have increased leadership responsibility as critical professional leaders and 'influencers' to lead cross-school teacher learning and share their expertise and wisdom with a wider group of teachers in curriculum and instruction. In this study, the teachers were terms as leaders-as-expert teachers and we explored their role in promoting, organising and coordinating cross-school teacher learning and instructional improvement. A case study design was employed with 12 participating leaders-as-expert teachers and their peers. Supplementary data were collected from observations of the collaborative learning activities organised by the leaders and associated documents including teacher leaders' writings and public talks. This study has provided insights drawn from insiders' views regarding one aspect of the success of Shanghai school education and contributes to the knowledge base in three domains: teacher learning and professional development; international understanding of instructional leadership; and educational leadership in China. The findings have important implications for teacher learning and instructional improvement practices in Hong Kong and beyond.



Key Issues and Significant Findings

Expert teachers:

- Can be identified and empowered by the system in order to exert leadership;
- Do not just extend their teaching expertise, but also influence what kinds of professionals their peers want to be; and
- Are learners as well as leaders.

In this study, cross-school instructional leaders were found to be the most important stakeholders. They were considered to be learners first and leaders second; and they accumulated their human, social and cultural capital.

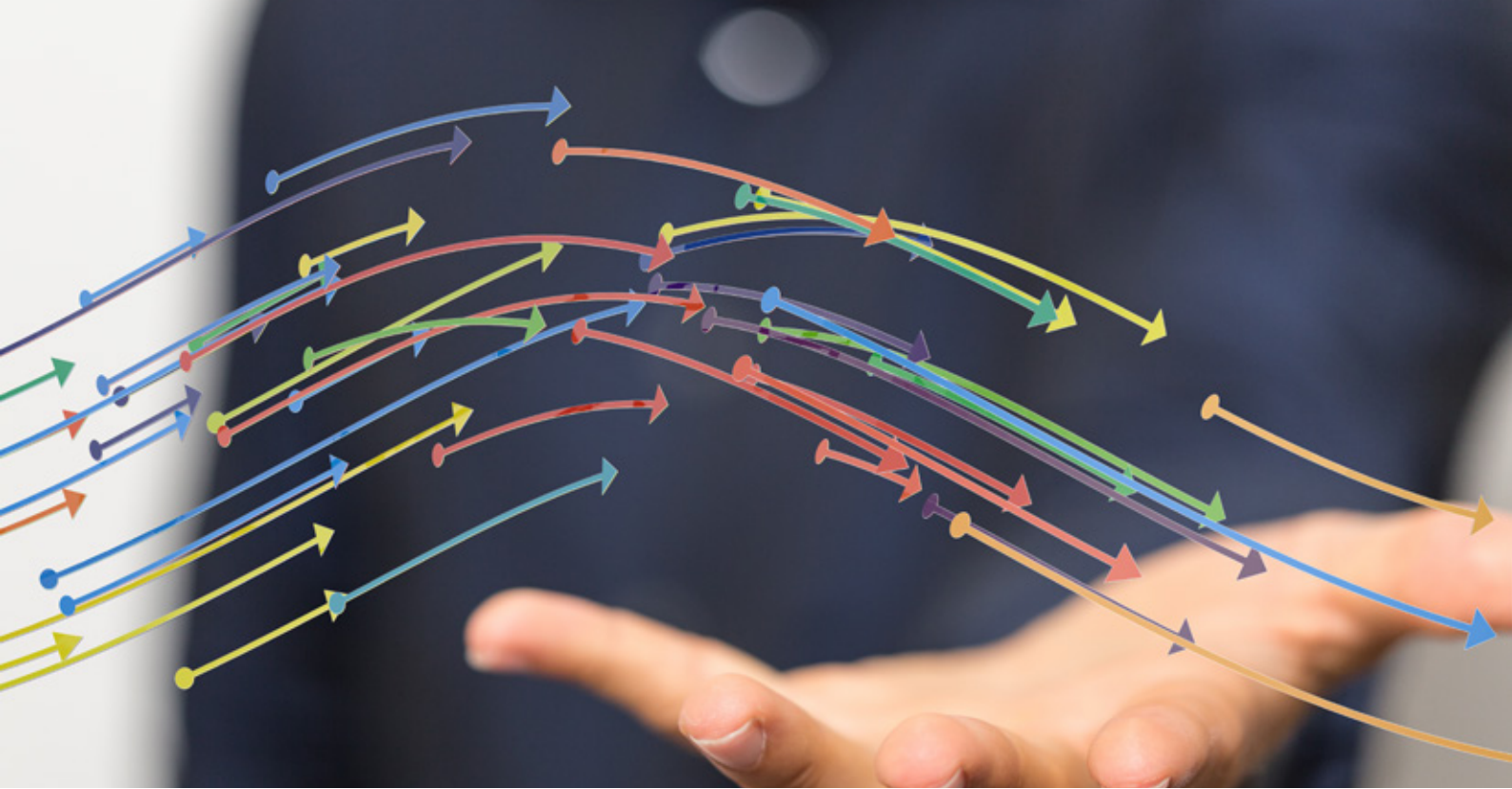


Main Stakeholders and Engagement with Them

- Leaders-as-expert teachers
- Peer teachers

Implications and Recommendations

- The research study provided insights extracted from insiders' views regarding the success of Shanghai school education and attempted to “unravel the codes” of its education processes, thus, facilitating a comparison between Shanghai and other high-performing systems in Asia (in particular, Hong Kong).



- As Shanghai and Hong Kong share a cultural heritage, the experiences of professional learning Shanghai may hold substantial implications for Hong Kong and other societies. A forum was conducted a couple of years ago to share knowledge among school practitioners in Hong Kong.



- The research findings have already been used in local teacher and leader development programmes with positive feedbacks received from the programme participants.





For more Information:

- 1 Qian, H. Y., & Walker, A. (2020). Expert teachers as drivers of teacher professional learning. *Australian Educational Leader*, 42(2), 29-32. ([Click to read](#))
- 2 For enquiries, please contact Dr Haiyan QIAN by hqian@eduhk.hk.



 Video Interview

