

Happiness and Learning Experiences for Thai Children vs the Participation Management of Thailand Educational System

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Abstract

The value in Thai society influences the children to perceive that “the happiness” is the financial success could bring about the happiness. This arouses the children to be stressed about learning, to gain more knowledge, is the children’s learning process developed by the educational system or taking extra course? Hence, the following questions have been brought up; “where is the children’s happiness of learning?” Then, another question has been raised that “where is the true happiness of learning for the children?” That’s why we currently pay attention to the Philosophy of children’s happiness which is based on the belief that the children will be happy and able to learn from their environment on account of the suitable support of adults, and that can be the benefit for developing the desired characteristics to children. On the other hand, learning helps people to adjust themselves to their society and environment. By the way, let children learn what they were interested in would help them happily develop their own skill and enhance their strong-mindedness. Although a family, it is important, the children will absorb such happy moment and learn about some skills that they can property us when they are in the society. This will allow, the children’s happiness of learning depends on the children themselves, and it is supported by the environment including their families, and the schools; the participation management, the related parties including schools, families, and communities to 1) sharing of information, 2) sharing of power, and 3) sharing of influence, becomes one of the methods to support the happiness and learning experience for Thai children.

Keyword: Happiness, Happiness and Learning Experiences for Thai Children, Participation Management of Thailand Educational System

Introduction

Someone wonders if the children in Thai society today are really happy, and how Thai children’s learning experiences are. That’s maybe because the children nowadays have to face a lot of pressures from society; for example, the highly competitive academic environment that pushes the children to work so hard in order to receive a compliment like the word ‘excellent’. They believe that they have to reach a high GPA, Grade Point Average, in order to make their parents love them, and that would bring about their happiness. Furthermore,

nowadays the value in Thai society influences the children to perceive that ‘the happiness’ is the financial success, in other words, to earn a lot of money could bring about the happiness. This arouses the children to be stressed about studying. The target of studying is just only for going to the university, and enrolling in the faculty that could make them earn a lot of money after graduation. Hence, the following questions have been brought up. Where is the children’s happiness of learning? To gain more knowledge, is the children’s learning process developed by reading, repeating, memorizing within the scope of textbooks defined by the educational system or taking extra courses? And will the children be happy just because they get high scores? Then, another question has been raised that “where is the true happiness of learning for the children?”

Learning is an Essential Process of Life

Learning is one of the processes that influences and changes behavior, emotion, attitude and one’s own action by doing. (Coon & Mitterer, 2009). Learning is defined as an essential process of life as well as being a lifelong activity (Kaya & Akdemir, 2016). Every single person has learned since he was born till the last days of his life. Learning and living go on together. Learning helps people to adjust themselves to their society and environment. Lyubomirsky (2007) said that to let children learn what they were interested in would help them happily develop their learning process. Several skills such as reading, researching, critical thinking, and hands-on learning would help children develop their own skills and enhance their strong-mindedness such as the sense of self-esteem.

Families or Schools: Which one the Great Sources of Children’s Happiness?

Noddings (2003) said that happiness was the positive feeling caused by person’s experiences that result in his or her satisfaction. Happiness is both the stage of life and the human characteristic that can be developed. That’s why we currently pay attention to the philosophy of children’s happiness which is based on the belief that the children will be happy and able to learn from their environment on account of the suitable support of adults, and that can be the

benefit for developing the desired characteristics to children. In addition, Noddings has divided the children’s happiness into 3 parts; 1) the happiness of learning that brings about the thinking process of children, 2) the happiness of living, and 3) the happiness of being with others. The three parts of the happiness start with families and schools which are the great sources of happiness and learning for children.

Although a family is a small social unit, it is important. The family consists of father, mother and child. We could see that the very first learning of the children happens in their family. It is learning from their parents. The parents will teach them about the rules and regulations in the family and allow them to learn about new things in their life whether it will be happiness, sadness, acceptance, or perceptions of the value of each other. The children will have good mental health and happiness because of love, warm and nice caring by their parents, and they will have good physical health by obtaining four basic needs and receiving sufficient and appropriate securities from their parents. The happiness the children obtain from their own families will allow them to know how to make other people and themselves happy. The children will learn by imitating their own parents; for example, eating together as a family will help the children to learn several things such as social grace at the dining table, nutrition knowledge, cleaning dining table, washing dishes, and understanding self-roles and functions. The communication during meals is also the good chance that the parents can learn about their children development. On the other hand, the children also learn about their parents’ thought and feeling. Therefore, when the parents create happy atmosphere during meals, the children will absorb such happy moment and learn about some skills that they can properly use when they are in the society (Coon & Mitterer, 2009).

How should the School that Full of Happiness Be?

A school is another important institute, namely, the school can be compared as the children’s second house which is the place for creating happiness and learning after the family. Thus, the next question is “How should the school that full of happiness be?” Childhood is the age with the characteristics of

being self-centered, loving doing trial and error and being naturally curious. The schools should integrate teaching and learning that allows children to develop themselves according to the philosophy of Holistic Education that includes the mind, the body and the society ([Boyd & Bee, 2006](#)) by considering the children's desire to learn as the main point or giving a chance to the children to choose what they want to learn. The teachers will play a role as a facilitator, including instruct and give them consultations when they have some trouble doing by themselves. This will allow the children to create learning by doing and gain experiences directly. When the children achieve their goals, the school should give them an opportunity to present their performance to the society and the teachers should function as a person who honestly praises them in order to encourage them to learn about giving and rewarding to society. In addition, the children will be proud of themselves, realize their own self-esteem and be satisfied with their performance. This is the children's happiness of learning and the fundamental importance for the children to be mature, become complete humanity and to be satisfied with their own lives ([Noddings, 2003](#)).

As mentioned above, we can answer aforesaid questions that actually the children's happiness of learning depends on the children themselves, and it is supported by the environment including their families and the schools. The children are not forced too much nor completely ignored, and that is the natural development of human beings. ([Payutto, 2018](#)). Therefore, both families and teachers should be involved in developing children both physically and mentally by focusing on teaching them to be happy and satisfied with what they are, and strengthen their mind. These can be happened because the children are allowed to participate both in family and society's activities. It can help children to link their experiences from hearing and listening with their understanding correctly. In addition, the advice of their parents and teachers for the right things will lead the children to learn from the experiences of their entire life happily, and that will result in the children's further well-being.

If any parties related to the development of the institution of family and the directors of Thailand

educational system put the importance on the children's authentic happiness of learning, and mutually integrate the philosophy and the methods to develop the sustainable happiness of learning for children, Thai society may be full of the children who are filled with true happiness due to their own attitude and learning experiences, and finally become "an absolutely human idol".

Participation Management, one of the Methods to Support Children's Happiness

The parties involving in the philosophy of children's happiness include the families, the schools, and the directors of educational system. ([Office of the Education Council, 2017](#)). In order to bring about the equal participation of the three related parties in the processes of educational system management for achieving the optimal efficiency and effectiveness, the Participation Management becomes one of the methods to support children's education for increasing happiness of learning, namely, the directors of educational system can open up an opportunity for the related parties including schools, families, and communities and support their ideas, motivate the staff of all sectors under educational system to participate in planning, push them to give the suggestions that benefit for the decision of the directors, encourage a sense of collective responsibility and cooperation among the staff for the development, and strengthen willingness to perform their duties pursuing the goals and policies.

The directors of education should consider the following three factors which are important and necessary for the Participation Management; 1) sharing of information, 2) sharing of power, and 3) sharing of influence. ([Rooncharearn, 2007](#)). These three factors will be the indicators of the Participation Management's quality of education. They will indicate how many opportunities that the directors of education open for others to participate in management. There are several methods to allow the related parties to participate in educational system management and that depends on the suitability; for example, to arrange the conference for deliberation, to give a chance for the operators in educational system, families, and communities

to give the suggestions and mutually set up the goal and how to achieve, follow up, evaluate, and find out the solutions. This will become the circle of the development to arrange an educational system for the purpose of children's happiness of learning.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that the concept of the happiness of learning of Thai children and the Participation Management in Thai educational system is likely to be an effective and efficient concept for developing children who will be the important resources of nation, and it is the concept that in line with the Democracy because it focuses on the importance of all levels of related parties. Moreover, the Participation Management also focuses on the importance of human rather than materials, and there is the belief that working as a team will lead to the better performance rather than working alone, and that will optimize the efficiency of educational management.

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