

The Guidelines for Implementing Happy Secondary School in Thailand

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Abstract

The article found that the happy secondary schools in Thailand consisted of three elements as student and teacher relationship, teaching and learning activities and learning climate and environment. Based on these three elements, the Levels of Happy School are defined into three levels. The guideline and handbook for implementing happy secondary school had developed with the key of success by cooperating activities between teacher and student, reviewing the results and keep improving.

Keywords: happy school, secondary school, implementing, guidelines, handbook

Introduction

According to the World Health Organization (1996), school is the place that children spend most of their time as well as the teacher and educational personal. The healthy workplace is the right answer for them.

To create workplace conditions in educational organizations meaningful and comfortable, individuals have to be able to integrate their social and psychological values with the organization. The integration makes a climate and a tone that separate organization from others in their feeling of the unique personality. Miskel & Ogava (1988) described that “[p]eople often sense that there are differences in the overall atmosphere of schools and that these differences somehow affect how people behave.”

In order for a child to grow into an adult, it is essential to determine the part of a child's development that is crucial for a person or child to be a happy, well-functioning adult (Helliwell *et al.*, 2015). Schools that prioritize student well-being are likely to be more effective. Also that with better learning outcomes and greater achievements in learners' lives (Layard & Hagell, 2015).

Martin Seligman described about Positive Psychology that Positive Psychology is the scientific study of happiness in what makes life most worth living. Positive psychology divided into 3 parts. First of all, Positive Emotion contains feelings such as joy, love and pleasure etc. A life which surrounds with positive emotion is Pleasant Life. Secondly, Positive Trait contains potential skills. A life which surrounds with positive traits is Engaged Life. Third, this best part contains knowing your highest strength and using them to serve something you believe is larger than the self. A life which surrounds competencies is a meaningful life (Seligman, 2002).

As we have known that the happy character can be built from inside human and the stress can caused the reduction of human ability, the interesting strategies to implement in happy schools should be the guideline to develop in schools in order to help not only the academic achievement but also the well-being of our youth who will be the future hope of our nation, ultimately, become the happily global citizen. The core concept of the study is to embrace a diversity of talents and intelligences by recognizing values, strengths and competencies that contribute to enhancing happiness (UNESCO, 2016).

Happiness in learning refers to the happy emotion of the learners that benefits their ability to learn and curiosity in learning. Many studies advise that happiness can influence the ability to learn, academic success, learning strategies, cognitive resources, motivation, and academic achievement. Many scholars defined the meaning of happiness in learning as follows:

Happiness in Learning means learners' feeling toward learning activities of teaching process from teacher including passion to learn and do activities, happy to participate with friends and teachers in school's appropriate environment for learning and also explained about enhancing knowledge with cognitive and happy learning in order to develop teacher as the main role for teaching process (Patphol, 2014).

Seligman *et al.* (2009) provided that more well-being is synergetic with better learning. Positive Psychology is often referred to as the science of happiness through character strengths that promote happiness, for example, creativity, perseverance, kindness and teamwork among others.

Blair (2012) indicated that low stress strengthens alertness which improves people's performance on complex tasks. However, if stress exceeds a certain level, stress starts to deteriorate performance.

Lertwicha & Jaruphakorn (2007) explained that the brain chemistry that emerges from positive emotion is the element to create happiness and rewards which impels learning.

Boonsue (2001) identified the theory of happy learning in 6 categories: every child should be accepted as a unique character, role of merciful teacher to all children, create self-loving and self-esteem children, open learning depends on children's skill, new, exciting and attractive lesson and applied knowledge to real life.

Panmonkol (2010) explained that happiness is the significant component in learning because the happiness during the learning process results in motivation and effective tactical learning.

Chatkup (2001) indicated that learning unhappily results in negative emotion which hinders brain functioning causing students not to convert new knowledge to long-term memory.

Kuha (2009) explained that if the students are happy with learning, it supports learning motivation, rapid and easy recognition, and lasts longer.

Presently, the study of happy school has a variety of definitions in many senses of educators. It shows differently in different contexts, not in the universal meaning. There are in the variety of definitions, however, the meaning is consistent.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) found from the survey with the respondents in ASEAN schools that across all respondents group illustrated how schools can use fun and engaging approaches to make learning enjoyable for students alike and how schools can promote learner freedom and encourage students to express their opinions and feel free to make mistakes. Also the illustration showed how schools can make students' workloads more reasonable, thus preventing excessive stress among students, the offering of ideas for extracurricular activities which all are considered most important for making the happy schools and describes the Happy Schools Project helps to bring the concept to life (UNESCO, 2016).

Pollard and Davidson (2001) explained the emotion domain related to social, emotional development, stress management, freedom and self-development with school engagement.

McGregor (2006) explained about the characteristic and development of teenagers' emotion in explicit and straight with high confidence but sometimes, depression and curiosity. Their opinions always conflict with adults.

Camfield et al. (2009) introduced the emotion and mind must be teach with love and warmth from both teacher and friends. If children can get along with friends, it makes them happy. Moreover, the children need to be socially acceptable and successful. Those factors made the children have a good mentality, a good temper and look lively. However, if the children had those problems, they should have been assisted and also protected for helping them in academic achievement and adapted into society.

Bayden and Cooper (2006) indicated about the emotional development of teenagers that frustrate, temper, violence and change most of the time. The school activities should match with their emotion accordingly.

Masters (2004) described that the school activities should correspond with potential, need and emotional development of teenagers.

Epstein and McPartland (1976) indicated the intention of learning is the important element of quality of life in school. The indicator showed the responsibility of doing assignments, passion in learning, visionary, adaptation, critical thinking and problem solving.

Whitmer, Sweeney and Myers (1998) claimed that the learning and teaching approaches should support academic activity to gain knowledge and experiences for learners under circumstances with motivating climate and real life in learning. They also indicated the environment in schools as a physical environment which included services related to basic needs of children that affect the development of children such as library, toilet, school cooperative and scholarship, etc.

Bradshaw et al. (2007) introduced the teaching and learning activities that are related and suitable with learners' purpose and objective.

According to Loima (2015), in Thailand, the relations between motivation and learning achievements of basic education have been exposed in modern research studies undertaken by an international research group of Chulalongkorn University. Researchers found that teachers gave to learners more space, and the learning outcomes came out better. A key factor of enhancing is the motivation and learning the

ability of teachers to assess the students' real motivation and learning. Many students of all regions in Thailand agreed that they liked a caring teacher who was an external motivating factor that could replace the missing internal motivation. For cases in which the teacher was not liked, external learning of "some" topics did not take place.

Moreover, the survey of the cooperation from Quality Learning Foundation and Assumption University in the article published on the Quality Learning Foundation website (2014) revealed that the 4,255 students' age between 14-18 years old in 17 provinces throughout Thailand during 1-15 April 2014 found that students agreed to improve the current situation of teaching and learning for 69.4%. The most stressful gaining from fear of examination/cannot further study into university admission for 65.5%. The following reasons showed in stress from academic achievement, tons of homework, teaching problem and comparison with better classmate from parents. The survey had reflexing the truth from students as victims to Thai Educational System. Almost students expressed their feeling that they were suffered from no choice and unfair education system. The expression of the students' feeling should be careful response and review on the educational management. The revolution of educational system should be return their opportunities as children-centered, self-awareness, suitable future career, happy to learn, recognition in their passion and not to shut the door for their diversities. Additionally, director of Assumption University (ABAC) Poll Research Institution added that 58.9% of students showed the feeling of inequality education in Thailand. The 58.7% of students believed that Thai students are the hardest studying in the world but unfortunately, cannot apply the knowledge to their real life. The first questions from 25% of students want to ask for their teacher about the improvement of teaching methodology to be more active and enthusiasm. When considering with the happiness in learning, it showed means of 5.78 from 10 points (Quality Learning Foundation, 2014).

There was accordance with the survey of study habit from Education Watch Project of Faculty of Education, Chulalongkorn University and university network within the region. The survey showed the result shows very clear that Thai students had problems with learning, the students felt unhappy or no fun with the learning, the students had stress in learning to compete instead of gaining knowledge. It is the times to review to arrange teaching and learning methodology to fit with Thai students in the current context. From the survey of 3,231 students in 5 regions of Northern, Northeastern, Southern, Central and Bangkok area for 8 factors of study habit, it found that more than 30% shows problems in 8 areas: time management, concentration in learning, note taking, comprehension reading, preparation for examination, reading speed, writing skill and stress management in examination. The problematic group shows majority in boy, secondary school level, stay in good economic status and live in central and Bangkok areas (Chalapirom, 2015).

From the above rationale problems, the researcher captures the problems from unhappy students among Thai schools with the low academic achievement (Quality Learning Foundation, 2014; Chalapirom, 2015). As we have known that the happy character can be built from inside human and the stress can caused the reduction of human ability, the interesting strategies to implement in happy schools should be the guideline to develop in schools in order to help not only the academic achievement but also the well-being of our youth who will be the future hope of our nation, ultimately, become the happily global citizen. The core concept of the study is to embrace a diversity of talents and intelligences by recognizing values, strengths and competencies that contribute to enhancing happiness.

Method

The authors divided the research methodology into 3 phases as follows:

Phase I: For the area of the study in qualitative phase, the researcher employs the in-depth interviews. The coding technique and summarized the opinions from the experts used for this study. The key informants are 7 experts who are the school directors of the Happy Schools Project and 1 officer of the Office of the Basic Education Commission. The criteria for experts' selection are the homogeneous experts as the school directors who are directed engaged in the Happy Schools Project with their school management and officers who are involved with the happy school projects. The research instrument is an interview guideline to collect the data. The time frame is 3 months period (June-August) in the academic year 2018.

Phase II: For the area of study in quantitative phase, the researcher employs the survey questionnaires. The study had conducted with the population of 10,755 teachers and 236,002 students in 119 public secondary schools of the Secondary Educational Service Area Office (SESAO) 1 and 2 in Bangkok Area under the Office of the Basic Education Commission in the academic years 2017-2018. The sample of the study comprises 385 teachers and 399 students in 4 secondary schools. The research instrument is the questionnaire to collect the data. The time frame was in Semester 2 of the academic year 2018 (November 2018-February 2019) and Semester 1 of Academic year 2019 (May-August, 2019).

Phase III: For the area of the study in qualitative phase, the researcher employs the Focus Group Discussion. The coding technique and summarized the opinions from the experts used for this study. The key informants are the 9 experts who are key informants of the

educational institution or professional in organization who have experienced in the field related to the happy schools and/or happiness of the organization.

Results

The researcher developed the three elements of happy schools: Element 1: Student and Teacher Relationship, Element 2: Teaching and Learning Activities, Element 3: Learning Climate and Environment. The researcher also defined three levels of happy school in Happy School Level 1 has any 1 element, Happier School Level 2 has any 2 elements and Happiest School Level 3 has all 3 elements. The key of success should be in cooperation between teacher and student, review the results and keep improving the activities following the three elements.

Element 1: Student and Teacher Relationship, the researcher defined the guideline activities in the compliments and encouragements among teacher and students, teachers and teachers, students and students, giving the assistance for each other among teacher and students, teachers and teachers, students and students, teachers are committed to helping their students, teachers accept additional duties if students will benefit.

Element 2: Teaching and Learning Activities, the researcher defined the guideline activities in other routine duties can go along with the job of teaching and learning, Professional Learning Community (PLC), Active learning and Extra activities regularly encouraged at this school and outside classroom activities.

Element 3: Learning climate and environment, the researcher defined the guideline activities in the learning facility and safe environment and improves the learning climate for the student.

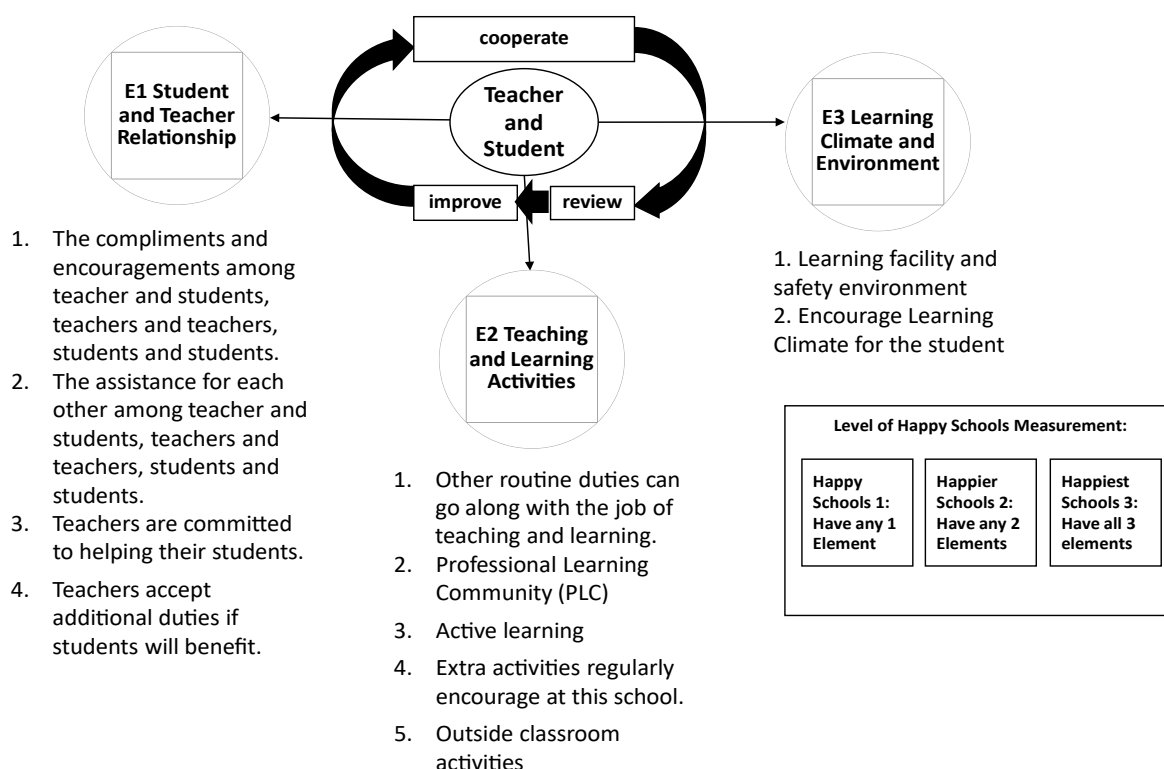


Figure 1: The Guidelines for implementing happy secondary school in Thailand

In fact, the context of each school is different individually. The researcher attempted to provide the road map to the school for operating their own style of happiness along with their own management. These elements and activities are genuinely applied to teachers and students in each school in their own way of integration to their group. When they found the needs or additional requirements, they could add upon the appropriate situation.

Conclusion

The guidelines for implementing happy secondary school in Thailand, there are 3 elements:

Element 1: Student and Teacher Relationship. The important activities in this element showed in good relationships, trust and warm relationships and social and encouraging relationships.

Element 2: Teaching and Learning Activities. The important activities in this element showed in the acceptance of the suggested activities, be careful of the burden work and extra activities and other routine duties go along.

Element 3 Learning Climate and Environment. The important activities in this element showed politeness and respect, safety and assistance and compliments and support needs.

The key of success should be in cooperation between teacher and student, review the results and keep improve the activities follows the three elements.

For the handbook, the researcher aimed to provide information useful to executives and teachers so they can prepare for and proceed through the guideline development work. Specifically, the handbook is included 1) Outline the three elements and eighteen activities of happy schools. 2) Direct the executives and teachers to check their school's status activities of happy schools. 3) Provide the level of happy schools regarding the elements and activities. 4) Assist the directors and teachers to have the direction to implement their happy schools.

For developing a handbook encompassed three phases:

- 1) Preparation Phase. Developing an effective guideline is essential to this phase.
- 2) Development Phase. The outcome is the awareness of the current status of happy schools level in their own school.
- 3) Finalization Phase. The schools know the direction of their own schools in order to select the priority activities that need the most for their schools.

Recommendation

For the policymaker

Even though policymakers aspire to help schools become happy schools, but there could be many restrictions in doing so which includes the national education policies, regulations, curriculum, and assessments. In addition, there could be national policies and curricula that support the philosophy of happy schools, but implementation at the school level is lacking. Hence, reforms at the national level needs to be in accordance with the reforms at the school level since both are equally important.

The national education policies mainly prioritizes happiness and learners' well-being, evaluate the evaluations and assessments, time spent on activities that focuses on non-academic aspects of achievements, and admission process. Thus, it is crucial to emphasize the importance of learners' happiness and well-being since it is part of

the learners' development and also part of the national education policy.

The curriculum should be useful, relevant, engaging for learners. This means that curricula need to be designed to cover relevant issues in today's society. Teachers should also guide learners to understand how the issues are relevant to learners' lives. In addition, schools are also required to integrate experiential learning into their instruction.

In accordance with the 20 years' national strategy of education, happy schools can be fulfilled with three elements of happy schools in the educational policy. Some examples of these strategies and traits: develop positive attitudes and attributes in teachers, improve teachers' work conditions and well-being, help develop teachers' skills and competencies, and assign reasonable, fair workload.

For the school director

At the school level, school executives and teachers should develop teamwork, collaboration, and respect. The school should provide fun, engaging and collaborative instruction, extracurricular activities, and school events. Teachers should support and encourage learners' freedom, creativity, engagement, sense of achievement, and sense of accomplishment. Teachers should also help students deal with their mental well-being and manage their stress.

For school's Learning Climate and Environment, the findings demonstrated that the school director should provide Secure Environment Free of Bullying, giving Open and Green Learning and Playing Spaces, lead School Vision and Leadership in sense of happiness, design the Positive Discipline, give the policy for Good Health, Sanitation and Nutrition, and encourage the Democratic School Management.

Suggestion for the future studies

The main objective of this research was to develop elements and activities to create the happy school of secondary schools in Thailand. The focus is directly on students and teachers inside the classroom. Therefore, the researcher suggests for future studies to focus more on the outside classroom which is important as much as inside the classroom. A highly recommended study that could be looked at in the future would be the extent of the group of stakeholders involved in the happiness of the students. To enhance the overview of happy schools, it should be included these 4 groups in the future research: 1) the group of executives 2) educational supporting staff 3) parental involvement and 4) related communities. More Stakeholders and categories of sample size in the survey should be added because of their impact on the happiness of students. The benefit of the future study is not only for education sectors but also the organization sectors as well. The student of today will be grown up and should be shaped as the potential citizen of the country in the future.

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