

Research Summary

Research title: A study of causal relationship of family-school situational antecedents of subjective well-being and learning behaviors of high school students in Thai educational reform practices: a longitudinal-sequential study
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Educational practices to enable Thai youths to be “good, capable and happy” to successfully meet the objective set out in the current National Education Plan must rely on close cooperation between the school and family. Numerous evidences from researches have shown that schools can improve students’ behaviors while they are at school. However, for the continued benefits to students’ mind and behavior, there must also be support from the family. The educational process, which is in line with the education reform that focuses on students and which is being implemented in schools at present, is an important factor that promotes students to attain the targeted characteristics. However, this is not enough. Consideration must be given to the social atmosphere in the school, relationships in the family, and the students’ own fundamental mental preparedness. These factors must come together to stimulate students to be good, happy and academically competent. Therefore, this research has 3 main objectives: (1) to study the impacts of social situations (family and school), perceived educational reform practices, and psychological factors on the subjective well-being and learning behaviors of high school students through the construction and testing of causal relationship models on subjective well-being and learning behavior of students in a cross sectional study (1st research), (2) to study major indicators of subjective well-being and to explain the characteristics of change of subjective well-being among high school students to see what are the major causal factors between factors on perceived educational reform practices, the atmosphere in the school, or the atmosphere in the family, through the construction and testing of linear models from data obtained from longitudinal - sequential study (2nd research), and (3) to study the relationships between various components of subjective well-being and learning behaviors of students.

Samples 1st research – a sample group of 673 students from grades 10 and 11 with data obtained from the first semester of the 2003 (B.E. 2546) academic year. 2nd research – same sample group, with data obtained from 4 periods, starting from the first semester of the 2003 (B.E. 2546) academic year to the last semester of the 2004 (B.E. 2547) academic year.

The variables in this research consisted of 5 groups of independent variables: (1) Situational Factors (with 3 family-related variables and 3 school-related variables), (2) Psychological Trait Factors with 5 variables, (3) Psychological States Factors with 3 variables, (4) Students’ Subjective Well-Being with 3 variables, and (5) Bio-Social Background with 5 variables. The dependent variables were the students’ Learning Behavior with 2 variables, namely, Learning Responsibility and Appropriate Friendship with Peers. The 19 main independent and dependent variables in this research were measured using the Summated Rating Method, with each of the questionnaire having an alpha coefficient reliability range between 0.728 and 0.928

In the first research, there was one main hypothesis and 7 sub-hypotheses. The second research consisted of 2 sets of research questions: the first set containing 2 questions and the second set containing 3 questions. The statistics tool used for data analysis in this research was Path Analysis via program LISREL Version 8.72

The major research results can be summarized as follows:

The 1st research: It has been found, from the test of goodness of fit between the hypothetical model and empirical data using cross sectional study data of 673 high school students from one period, that the model fits empirical data with Chi-square (χ^2) of 394.98 ($df = 128$) at .05 level of significance. This indicates that the hypothetical model is not consistent with empirical data. However, considering the values of the other indicators, it can be seen that the GFI value was .95, AGFI was .90, RASEA was .055, SRMR was .046, CFI was .99 and NNFI was .98, and that the values of these goodness of fit indicators, in comparison with their corresponding minimum values, were all (except chi-square) in the range that indicates that the model can explain the relationships among variables.

Considering the pathways among different variables in the model for students in general (Figure 7), it was found that (1) Subjective Well - Being got direct effect from 3 causal variables: Attitude towards Educational Reform Practices, Family Relationship and School's Atmosphere, in order of significance (with path coefficients of .55, .33 and .25 respectively), which together could explain the Subjective Well-Being at 88 percent, (2) Learning Behavior got direct effect from Psychological State and Subjective Well-Being (with path coefficients of .55 and .30 respectively) which together could explain Learning Behavior at 68 percent, (3) Grade Point Average got direct effect from Learning Behavior (with path coefficients of .34) which could explain Grade Point Average at 12 percent, and (4) Psychological State and Subjective Well-Being were endogenous variables mediating the relations between exogenous causal variables and Learning Behavior.

The 2nd research was a longitudinal - sequential study (4 semesters) on 622 high school students which can be summarized as follows: **(1) How did subjective well-being change?** The result of data analysis indicated that the average values of well-being indicators (comprised of life satisfaction, self-esteem and positive relationship with others) in the 4 periods were constant, without any noticeable changes. A trend was found that the value of life satisfaction indicator increased while the indicator on positive relationship with others decreased, when compared to the indicators' average values with their possible ranges. It may be said that the 3 indicators had medium to high average values, ranking in descending order as positive relationship with others, self-esteem, and life satisfaction. **(2) How were the correlations among the indicators of Subjective Well-Being and did the relationships change through time?** The result of data analysis showed that the three subjective well-being indicators had medium to high positive correlations. The self-esteem and positive relationship with others had the highest correlation, followed by the relationship between life satisfaction and self-esteem, and the relationship between life satisfaction and positive relationship with others which had the lowest correlation. A pattern of relationship among well-being indicators could be found only in the relationship between variables of self-esteem and positive relationship with others, in which the degree of relationship (or constancy) changed incrementally throughout the 4 study periods. **(3) What were the causes of change in students' subjective well-being?** The result of analysis on causal relationship model of the change in subjective well-being showed that relationship in the family had more significant effect to subjective well-being than the other 2 variables, namely perceived educational reform practices and school's atmosphere, did in the first study period (first high school's academic semester). In the following 3 periods of study (periods 2 to 4), it had been found that attitude towards educational reform practices, school's atmosphere, and perceived

educational reform practices had more significant effect in predicting changes of subjective well-being than relationship in the family did, especially in the changes in the self-esteem aspect of well-being.

The findings of this research can be important evidences that could lead to the setting of policies and measures in strengthening well-being in order to influence students' learning responsibility and appropriate friendship with peers, and in developing subjective well-being as an indicator of well-being in Thai youths so that we can appropriately assist youths with low levels of subjective well-being, and protect and promote youths with medium and high levels of well-being.