

The Significance of 'Happiness Education' in Middle Schools in China

Juan Ren, Muhantha Paramalingam

Department of education, Faculty of Social Science, Arts and Humanities, Lincoln University College (LUC), Malaysia Kelantan 47301

Abstract: There's great significance of 'happiness education' in China. First, it's the requirement of the country. The mission of Chinese educators is to educate people for the Party and the country. The Chinese Dream, to realize national prosperity, national rejuvenation, and people's happiness, vividly expresses the common ideal and present pursuit of all Chinese people. Secondly, it's the need of the students. In China, the inertia of exam-oriented education and the deep-rooted theory of fractions still regard examination as the purpose, and education deviates from its original intention. Students become the vassals of knowledge, their personality is constantly disappearing, their dignity is disappearing, and their interpersonal relationships are alienated. At the same time, the pressure of teachers is increasing, job burnout is becoming more serious. Teachers' professional happiness is generally declining, and the happiness of school life is constantly losing in the campus. Thirdly, it's the destination of education. The purpose of education is for human life, and the purpose of human life is happiness. As the famous educator Wushensky said, "The main purpose of education is to make students happy. It is beyond doubt that we cannot sacrifice this happiness for any irrelevant interests."^[1] Education is forward-looking. It takes people ten years to grow trees successfully while one hundred years human beings. The realization of the Chinese dream of people's happiness begins with this step. The implementation and practice of happiness education for all, especially in all stages of education in the education system, is extremely urgent with great significance.

Keywords: happiness, 'happiness education', significance, China

Introduction

The political and social functions of education determine that the content of education should serve the goals of the state and the needs of society. The age characteristics of middle school students and the special position of elemental education in the overall educational structure require that we need to pay special attention to middle school education because middle school students are in an important stage of life, which is an important period for the formation of world view, outlook on life, and values.

As far as the topic of happiness is concerned, it is the lifeblood of the national economy and people's livelihood and the future development of the country. At present, China's happiness index is very low, and we need to re-examine whether there are serious problems in education and in middle school education. On the road to achieving "national rejuvenation, national prosperity and strength, and people's happiness", education should play an active role in it, and it can be said that the realization of the goal of happiness depends to a large extent on the direction and implementation effect of education and middle school education.

In the past two decades, the problem of middle school students has become more and more serious. The vast majority

of students do not get enough sleep. They lack of exercise, and have a decline in physical fitness. Many middle school students lack motivation to learn and are seriously tired of studying.^[2] The relationship between students and parents is strained. Many students are under great psychological pressure, with varying degrees of anxiety and depression, and more serious self-harm and suicide. These phenomena have increasingly attracted the attention of schools, families and society.

The experience of happiness in things affects people's behavior, and people's behavior also reflects the happiness experience of certain specific things. This article will re-emphasize the importance of happiness education, especially happiness education for middle school students, from many aspects, such as the goals of the country, the function of education, the particularity of middle school education, and the serious consequences of the lack of happiness, etc.

1. Low happiness status of Chinese people

Happiness is a subjective feeling of people's satisfaction with life. The happiness index is a subjective indicator that measures the specific level of people's feelings. The concept of 'happiness index' originated more than 30 years ago and was first proposed and put into practice by the King Singh of Bhutan (1955-). For more than 20 years, Bhutan, a small South Asian country with a per capita GDP of only over 700 US dollars, has led to a generally happier life for its citizens. The "Bhutan model" has attracted the attention of the world's mining calendar. In recent years, developed countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and Japan have started researching happiness indices and created different models of happiness indices. The happiness index of the people is as important as GDP. On the one hand, it can monitor the economic and social operation situation; On the other hand, it can understand people's life satisfaction. It can be said that as the most important non-economic factor, it is a "barometer" of social operation and people's living conditions, and also a "wind vane" of social development and people's hearts.

The United Nations has released the Global Happiness Index report every year since 2012, comparing the happiness levels of people in 156 countries and regions around the world. Table 1 below shows the happiness index and ranking of China within the past three years from 2021-2023.

Table 1 The happiness index and ranking of China

Year	China	
	Index	Ranking
2021	5.339	84
2022	5.585	72
2023	5.818	64

As shown in Table 1, we can find the feature of happiness index of China is very obvious. Its Index is always below 6 points, which is really not optimistic. We can say Chinese people don't live happily and they aren't happy in their lives in general.

There are some reasons for the low index. Most of all, Chinese people believe that diligence is the first virtue, so adults work very hard, while students study very diligently. And also, China has a large population with relatively limited resources in materials, higher and advanced universities and good jobs etc. People are forced to work or study harder and harder to get better wants. In China, a very popular term has recently emerged, called "roll". It means, everyone wants to be better than others. If one works hard, another one works even harder.

The happiness index in China is very low, which requires us to pay attention to the happiness experiences of the people and carry out value reconstruction, starting from children, which is happiness education.

2. Function of education

The primary function of education is to promote individual development, including socialization and personalization. The most fundamental function of education is to influence changes in the social talent system and economic development. The economic functions of heavy education in modern society mainly include: providing a good background for the sustained and stable development of the economy; Enhance the potential labor capacity of learners; Develop a mindset,

attitude, and behavior that adapts to modern economic life. The social function of education is to cultivate talents for the development of the country and serve the political and economic development of the country. The most profound function of education is to influence cultural development. Education not only needs to transmit culture, but also needs to meet the requirements for the continuation and renewal of culture itself.

Therefore, education influenced individual and society so much that education aimed at happiness can improve students' sense of happiness and then the whole country fellows' by focusing on their well-being and taking proactive measures. On the contrary, education aimed at other purposes may lead to our work deviating from the ultimate direction, leading to unhappiness of the whole country.

And Middle school education is the foundation of the entire education system and the middle school stage plays a decisive role in the transformation of students' lives.

Youths are the future of a country. If the youth are strong, the country will be strong, and if the youth are happy, the country will be happy. The two parties complement citizens and students each other. So it's important to establish a happiness education system as soon as possible to meet the needs of national rejuvenation and fulfill the urgent need for students' education. Every school and every educator should be strongly aware of the urgency of this need, and shoulder the heavy responsibility of building a strong country with talent and an innovative country, achieving national prosperity, national rejuvenation, people's happiness, and cultivating qualified builders and reliable successors in the socialist cause.

So, educators should take the responsibility to educate happy students with abilities to enjoy happiness and to make others happy too.

Education is important enough to be a country's long-term plan including lifelong education at all stages, preschool education, basic education, higher education, vocational education etc. At the level of social civilization, education is necessary for the development of people's intelligence.

Education is important and includes all stages to indicate the basic significance of the stage of Middle school education in the following part.

3. The particularity of middles school education

Middle school education (aged from 13-15) is an extremely important stage of education. Middle school students are in a beautiful and colorful flower season filled with fantasies in their lives, and it is also the beginning and primary stage of various problems that emerge one after another. This period often lays the foundation for human future development and happiness. In addition, middle school is a new stage of life development that can lay an important foundation for one's entire life. Middle school witnessed a person's life progression of youth. With the continuous development of their body and mind, they begin to delve deeper into the mysteries of life and lift the veil of the spiritual world with curiosity. As self-awareness gradually awakens, they begin to actively discover and recognize themselves; With the continuous improvement of their thinking level and understanding ability, their understanding of the world becomes more specific and in-depth. Middle school education plays a so important role both in people's educated lifetime and their future happiness that it's impossible for us to neglect the following problems:

First, what is the purpose of Middle school education? Is educating students to get into high school and university the only and most important thing in middle schools? It's time to reconsider the goal.

Secondly, Chinese educators are facing urgent problems related to students' physical and psychological health, where's the way out for education in China? Many teachers and schools have done a lot during the ten years, but it's just in the stage of beginning.

Thirdly, the happiness status among the students in all stages of education is quite low. Chinese teachers are lack of practice of improving students' happiness experiences. And the base of happiness education in China is weak.

How to enable middle school students to receive happiness education and better implement it on high school campuses has become a continuous research and exploration issue for relevant scholars. The purpose of implementing happiness education is to enable middle school students to truly feel happiness, better understand happiness in family,

campus, and social activities, and create and share happiness in practice.^[3] This is also the ultimate significance of happiness education and the major issue studied in this article.

4. Effects caused by neglect of happiness education

The lack of happiness ability can lead to a lack of personal and social happiness. The lack of happiness education can lead to the negation of the value and meaning of life by individuals and even the entire society. Growth issues, family issues, and social relationship issues arise one after another, with a lack of enthusiasm and family awareness. At present, there is a continuous growth of non-conformists in China, and the worsening problems of low marriage rate, low birth rate, and aging are the most concentrated manifestations. Only by caring about everyone's happiness status and solving the problem of low personal happiness can we improve the overall happiness index of society and solve a series of social problems from the source.

5. Conclusion

The overall happiness situation of Chinese people is not optimistic, including students. Education and especially middle schools urgently need to implement and promote happiness education to improve students' concept of happiness, happiness ability and happiness index effectively. On the path of happiness education in China, it is important to learn from the experiences of other countries, for example, Maslow's theory of happiness provides us with a new perspective to understand human needs and behaviors. But it is more important to be based on the facts of its own. Adhering to the implementation of the "double reduction policy" can solve the urgent problem on the surface. The reform of the college entrance examination policy and the transformation of the talent evaluation mechanism are key, while the improvement and reconstruction of the value system is essential.

Conflicts of interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

References

- [1] Qin X. Learning Wei Shusheng's Educational Thought and Achieving a Happy Life for Preschool Teachers. *Education Today (Kindergarten Education Journal)*. 2017; 06: 12-14.
- [2] Gao H, Wang C. Implementing "Double Reduction": Heading Towards Happiness Education. *Junior High School Student World*. 2022; (32): 8-9.
- [3] Bi Y., Zhang L. Implement "Double Reduction" to Allow Students to Enjoy Happiness Education. *Educator*. 2023; (33): 41.