

**DEVELOPMENT OF A NON-FORMAL  
EDUCATION PROGRAM FOR PARENTS TO  
ENHANCE COMMUNICATIVE ABILITIES  
ON SEX EDUCATION OF THEIR  
ADOLESCENT CHILDREN**

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**Abstract:** The purposes of this research are 1) to study the parents' learning needs for enhancing their communicative abilities on sex education of their adolescent children; 2) to develop a non-formal education program for the parents to enhance their communicative abilities on sex education of their adolescent children based on the concepts of parent education, participatory learning, self-efficacy, and interpersonal communication; 3) to implement a non-formal education program for parents to enhance communicative abilities on sex education of their adolescent children; and 4) to study the factors, conditions, and problems of learning which have an influence over the non-formal education program developed. The design of this study is the quasi-experimental research approach with two groups' pretest and posttest. In this study, the population is the parents whose children are studying in Mattayomsuksa I, and aged between 11-13 years old. The research samples are comprised of 40 parents (20 parents in an experimental group, and 20 parents in a comparison group) from Child and Adolescent Mental Health Rajanagarindra Institute.

The research procedure is divided into four stages in relation to the research objectives. Based on the non-formal education program developed, the researcher is going to train the experimental group by applying the concepts of parent education, participatory learning, self-efficacy, and interpersonal communication.

The research instruments included a questionnaire, structured interview, and an evaluation form. The result is a non-formal education program for parents based on the concepts of parent education, participatory learning, self-efficacy, and interpersonal communication approach to enhance communicative abilities on sex education of their adolescent children (including the characters of knowledge, attitudes and skills). In addition, the study shows factors and conditions involving the implementation of the

developed program. Currently, the research procedure is at the stage of research instrumentation.

**Keywords:** Sexual Communication, the Parents' Learning Needs, Non-formal Education Program

**Introduction**

In modern Thailand, Thai youth's sex behavior has been influenced by western culture until it leads to sex problems and social problems. According to Health Department of Ministry of Public Health, 2008, Thai teenagers held a higher record of first-time sex, pregnancy, abortion than those in some western countries. Moreover, AIDS infection caused by risky sex behavior in the teenage group increased gradually.

Typically, a parent, the first teacher and the closest friend of his/her own child, should provide all dimension of appropriate knowledge, attitude, behavior, including sex topic to his/her children. As a result, what the adolescents behave depends on their parents' teaching. The family role in preventing adolescents' sex problems therefore should be emphasized, apart from schools. However, when talking about sex issues to children, their parents encounter some communicative difficulties because of the following features:

1. Lack of knowledge and understanding: In Thai society, "sex" refers to only sexuality, but in general meaning, "sex" also widely covers in aspects of sex hygiene, interpersonal relationship, satisfaction, gender role, sexual development, values, and beliefs, etc., WHO (2002). So, their information and understanding in sex is insufficient to communicate with their children.

2. Thai Cultural tradition: Based on Thai cultural tradition for generations, Thai parents have been taught that sex is something dirty, embarrassed, forbidden, kept secret. Then, it is not conveyed to children. (Madhurada Charoenthaveesap, 2002)

3. Parentall attitude: The parents' attitude towards sex is different from their children's in terms of premarital sexuality. In other word, new generation agrees on this sex behavior while their parents cannot accept it. (Research and Population Institute Mahidol University, 2005)

4. Lack of communication skill: Although some parents are ready to play an active role as a sex consultant to their children, they still do not know how to communicate with them or how to solve their

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children's troubles. Then, have no confidence to do this duty.

Regarding the parents' important role and their obstacles in communicating with their children on sex issues mentioned above, parents need to be equipped with communicative abilities on sex education of their children in order to improve parents' quality by supplying parent education properly; knowledge, understanding, attitude, and skill.

In Thailand, Rajanagarindra Institute Ministry of Public Health, is specialized in promoting and preventing psychological problems in teenagers and family; providing knowledge to people in various forms, and conducting activities for parents. A need analysis of this institute shows that communication training on sex education for parents with adolescent children is strongly supported by parents.

As a result, the researcher is interested in developing a non-formal education program for parents to enhance communicative abilities on sex education of their adolescent children. The core approach for running this program is parent education along with the three following concepts:

1. Participatory learning: This learner-center technique focuses on students' participation via participatory activities that cover four areas; 1) experience; 2) reflection and discussion; 3) understanding and conceptualization; 4) experimentation/application;

2. Self-efficacy: This idea defines the parents' confidence in their communicative abilities on sex education can affect their communication effectiveness. Bandura (1986) proposed primary factors to improve parents' self-efficacy; 1) enactive mastery experience (the more successful experience, the more self-efficacy); 2) vicarious experience (compare with successful person increasing self-efficacy); 3) verbal persuasion (give encouraging words); 4) physiological and affective state (body and mind interaction).

3. A humanistic model of effective Interpersonal communication: This model consists of five features; 1) openness; 2) empathy; 3) supportiveness; 4) positiveness; 5) equality. In addition, sex education contents include six study areas of hygienic, biology, sociology, and psychology, which are composed of six major topics, particularly, knowledge of human development, family relationship, knowledge and understanding in life skill and good values, knowledge and understanding in sex behavior, knowledge of sex hygiene, including social and cultural knowledge and understanding.

The researcher expects that parents gaining knowledge and good attitude towards sex education could give advice to their adolescent children accurately and effectively. In addition, they would be aware of importance of sex education communication with their children. These would finally lead to more

communication and more understanding in sex education in Thai society, and then would protect Thai society from social problems appropriately.

### Objectives

1. To analyze parents' learning needs in order to enhance communicative abilities on sex education of their adolescent children

2. To analyze parents' learning needs in order to enhance communicative abilities on sex education of their adolescent children.

3. To develop a non-formal education program for parents to enhance communicative abilities on sex education of their adolescent children by adopting the approaches of participatory learning, self-efficacy, and effective interpersonal communication

4. To investigate the experimental result from applying a non-formal education program, developed by the researcher, to parents with adolescent children

5. To explore factors and suggestions related to applying the non-formal education program, developed by the researcher, to parents with adolescent children.

### Research Hypothesis

1. The experimental group of parents will get higher scores on knowledge of sex education and sex communication, skills and attitudes towards sex communication, and self-efficacy after participating in a non-formal education program for parents to enhance communicative abilities on sex education of their adolescent children.

2. The experimental group of parents that participates in a non-formal education program for parents to enhance communicative abilities on sex education of their adolescent children will get higher scores than the control group in terms of knowledge of sex education and sex communication, skills and attitudes towards sex communication, and self-efficacy.

### Scope of Study

The scope of this study is divided into 3 parts, i.e. population, variables, and contents.

### Population

The population of this research comprises parents who live with their adolescent children aged between 11-13 years old, and studying in Mathayom 1. The samples are randomly selected from the parents obtaining advice at along with participating in a non-formal education program for parents to enhance communicative abilities on sex education of their adolescent children.

## Variables

According to the development of a non-formal education program for parents to enhance communicative abilities on sex education of their adolescent children, which is based on the concepts of participatory learning, self-efficacy, and effective interpersonal communication, the researcher has set variables for this study as follows:

**Independent variable:** A non-formal education program for parents to enhance communicative abilities on sex education of their adolescent children under the concepts of participatory learning, self-efficacy, and effective interpersonal communication.

**Dependent variable:** Communicative abilities on sex education, which consist of knowledge of sex education and sex communication, skills and attitudes towards sex communication, and self-efficacy.

## Contents

The researcher has studied the related theories, which cover the following contents.

Non-formal education refers to meaning and philosophy of non-formal education, parent education, together with arranging activities and developing a non-formal education program for parents.

Based on the fields of hygienic, sociology, biology, and psychology, sex education content can be categorized into six topics, particularly, human development knowledge, family relationship, knowledge and skills in life including good value, knowledge and understanding of sex behavior, sexual health, as well as social and cultural insight.

## Conceptual Framework

**Input:** The input that comes from collecting data along with exploring concepts and theories in related documents and research results in the conceptual framework of research and development of a non-formal education program for parents, particularly; 1) parent education; 2) participatory learning; 3) self-efficacy; 4) effective interpersonal communication.

**Process:** The process involves managing the input to set a non-formal education program, which is synthesized and developed by the researcher as detailed below:

2.1 10-stage program development: 1) specify target group; 2) survey target group's learning needs; 3) identify methods of program implementation; 4) set program objectives; 5) specify program contents; 6) set time-table; 7) evaluate before training; 8) organize situational training activities and learning activities; 9) evaluate after training; 10) follow up the program result.

2.2 Learning content: The obtained knowledge from investigating parents' needs on sex education via a variety of activities and techniques is made up of six topics, particularly, human development knowledge, family relationship, knowledge and skills in life including good value, knowledge and understanding of sex behavior, sexual health, and social and cultural insight.

2.3 Pre-post evaluation: Both of control group and experimental group are evaluated before and after experiment by a questionnaire, group interview, tests on knowledge, attitudes and skills.

**Output:** A non-formal education program for parents to enhance communicative abilities on sex education of their adolescent children together with positive factors, problems, and obstacles when administering a non-formal education program developed.

## Research Methodology

Developing a non-formal education program for parents to enhance communicative abilities on sex education of their adolescent children adopts a quasi-experiment research method by utilizing research procedure, control groups pretest-posttest design. This study is divided into four phases with regard to the objectives.

*Phase 1: Exploring background information, problems, and parents' learning needs to promote communicative abilities on sex education of their adolescent children*

The first phase of this study is conducted in accordance with conceptual framework of program development at stage 1 and 2, that is, specifying target group and survey target group's learning needs (both parents and adolescent children) respectively. The research instrument includes a questionnaire developed by the researcher as the following steps:

- 1) The researcher examines theories, documents, textbooks, articles, and research work relating to communicative abilities on sex education of adolescent children both in Thailand and in foreign countries.
- 2) Analyze essential contents of sex education, media, communicative abilities, and self-efficacy.
- 3) Construct a questionnaire about learning needs to promote communicative abilities on sex education of adolescent children.

*Phase 2: Developing a non-formal education program in relation to participatory learning, self-efficacy, and effective interpersonal communication*

The second phase relates to implementing 10-stage program development synthesized by the researcher, identifying program contents, setting the scope of parent education topics derived from the study of parent education needs for effective communication skills, hygienic, biology, sociology, psychology, which can be classified into six topics, particularly, human development knowledge, family relationship, knowledge and skills in life including good value, knowledge and understanding of sex behavior, sexual health, including social and cultural insight.

The research instrument of this phase is composed of 1) test of sex education knowledge; 2) attitude test of sex education communication; 3) skill test of sex education communication; 4) self-efficacy test of sex education communication.

Steps of setting-up activities:

- 1) Study documents and information regarding participatory learning, self-efficacy, and effective interpersonal communication skill.
- 2) Set up participatory learning activities by studying and gathering related information from various ideas, theories, and principles, i.e. participatory learning approach, self-efficacy approach, parent education approach, and interpersonal communication skill approach, then synthesize to develop administration process of learning experience that responds to the objectives. This development consists of activities arranged by participatory learning cycle; content improvement of parent education on effective communication skill according to Devito's concept along with hygienic, biology, sociology, and psychology. These study concepts are all mixed into 6 topics; human development knowledge, family relationship, knowledge and skills in life including good value, knowledge and understanding of sex behavior, sexual health, including social and cultural insight, and each topic is consistent with the objectives, i.e. worksheet, knowledge sheet, CD, test, and performance report.
- 3) Check correctness, revise and develop the program as recommended by the advisor and the experts.

*Phase 3: Experimenting on a non-formal education program for parents to enhance communicative abilities on sex education of their adolescent children under the concepts of participatory learning, self-efficacy, and effective interpersonal communication*

Corresponding to the program development framework at stage 8 and 9, the third phase refers to the following procedures:

- 1) In order to collect background information before experiment, the control and the experimental groups need to do tests of communication on sex education in terms of knowledge, skills, and attitudes, as well as self-self-efficacy test. In addition, each adolescent child in the sample groups will take a test of his/her parent's receptive communication on sex education.
- 2) Giving 100-hour training as scheduled in the program to the experimental group attending a non-formal education program regarding contents and activities developed by the researcher at Rajanagarindra Institute

In conclusion, the program provides knowledge and practice in classroom under group process, group discussion, reflection, small group activities, real and symbol role models, role-play, case study, studying handbook of sex education for parents with adolescent children, and application in real situation at home that will lead to communicative abilities on sex education of their adolescent children.

*Phase 4: Study factors, problems, and suggestions related to adoption of a non-formal education program*

In accordance with program development framework at stage 10, this phase is composed of program follow-up by measuring children's knowledge, attitudes, skills, and self-efficacy in the experimental group. During experiment, the researcher also explores some certain information sources such as observation of learners' interaction, learning management atmosphere, instructors' role. In case of problems and obstacles from learning activities, they are derived from questionnaires in the experimental group, which will later be analyzed and summarized in aspects of opinion, satisfaction, and condition. The conclusion from the result will be exploited to further develop a more effective and appropriate program.

#### **Current Research Result**

Presently, this study is in the process of constructing research instrument or stage 1 and 2. This process includes not only examining research instrument, but also measuring reliability by applying content validity instrument approved by experts to a pre-experimental group of 40 parents, which has certain attributes like the experimental group. To be prepared for real experiment, the obtained data then will be measured for confident interval of the instrument by Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient.

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