



The 14th National and International Conference

"Global Goals, Local Actions: Looking Back and Moving Forward 2021"

18 August, 2021

Teaching and Learning Approach According to Tri-Sikkha based on Moderate Postmodern Philosophy Paradigm¹

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Abstract

Teaching and learning approach according to the modern philosophy believes and accepts scientific thinking methods that can be proved by scientific process. However, the modern philosophy has some defects about teaching and learning approach that has been so strict in particular patterns, aimed at learners' achievements by focusing on studying and competition until they have no happiness in learning. However, teaching and learning approach according to Tri-Sikkha based has the different learning development process as it aims to raise happiness in learners, and be wise to the world's fate. The Moderate Postmodern Philosophy aims to improve the quality of life, and to be happy subject to actual circumstances. Is the teaching and learning approach according to the moderate postmodern philosophy consistent with teaching and learning approach according to Tri-Sikkha? This study is the philosophical research aiming to interpret the teaching and learning approach according to Tri-Sikkha in the moderate postmodern philosophy paradigm. The research study was conducted subject to the philosophical methodology by analysis, appreciation, and

¹ This article is a part of the thesis on "Teaching and Learning Approach According to Tri-Sikkha based on Moderate Postmodern Philosophy Paradigm: An Analytic, Appreciative and Applicative study¹



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application to obtain knowledge close to facts as much as possible. Data and documents were interpreted to find out the best solution from the compromise of all parties as much as possible, and with better reasons than all parties as much as possible. The research contents were presented by analysis, appreciation, and application. The result indicated that the teaching and learning approach according to Tri-Sikkha in the moderate postmodern philosophy paradigm was consistent because the moderate postmodern philosophy is the flexible teaching and learning approach that does not focus on the learning contents, but skills in knowledge acquisition, chance in creating new knowledge, adaptation, collaboration, and seeking for working methods to attain the established goals. This result was consistent with the concept of active learning based on Tri-Sikkha could be applied to the learner-focused teaching and learning approach according to Tri-Sikkha consistently and on balance.

Keywords: paradigm, Tri-Sikkha, teaching and learning approach, moderate postmodern philosophy

Introduction

The Buddha identified the Tri-Sikkha as training in: 1. higher virtue 2 higher mind 3. Higher wisdom which Buddhism Oriented school use for teaching in term of 1. moral conduct including school rules 2. meditation and concentration 3. wisdom

Previously, Tri-Sikkha applied in teaching and learning approach has been based on the modern paradigm that knowledge network system needed the systematic teaching and learning approach. (Teaching and learning approach is the process of empowering all educational resources to achieve learning objective, learning component namely: student, teacher, goals, materials, methods, tool, and evaluation). The modern philosophical paradigm promotes learning under the systematic management or under standards and measures to make students have their learning achievements. It is necessary to have a good teaching and learning approach system, curriculum, teaching and learning approach plan, and systematic evaluation. Earlier, teaching and learning approach according to Tri-Sikkha could be divided into 4 stages: Stage 1 is the introduction stage. Stage 2 involves 3 steps: (2.1) learners have



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discipline and meditation in studying contents; (2.2) teacher arranges activities arousing learners to think, research, question, and analyze; and (2.3) learners do the activities and practice together by emphasizing them to be responsible in their work and sacrifice. Stage 3 is to conclude and review the use of wisdom and reason, comprising 3 steps: (3.1) group activity to summarize the contents learnt; (3.2) work presentation by a group representative or every group member; and (3.3) teacher summarizes the content issues and what to be applied in learners' daily life. Stage 4 is the evaluation stage comprising 3 steps: (4.1) to summarize learners' learning by themselves by recording their learning; (4.2) to evaluate their learning by answering the questionnaire or test designed by the teacher; and (4.3) to conclude the teaching for further improvements. These 4 stages are the stages of teaching and learning approach that is integrated with Tri-Sikkha according to the moderate postmodern philosophy paradigm. Only systematic evaluation can measure and evaluate accurately and correctly. The evaluation in Tri-Sikkha system may be divided into: (1) evaluation of curriculum structure; (2) evaluation of teaching and learning approach plan; and (3) evaluation of satisfaction of teachers, learners and other related persons. However, these learning stages in every class make the students feel bored because they know what the teacher will instruct them to do step by step. As a result, the teaching and learning approach fails to challenge learners' eager in learning.

At present, Thai education has confronted the problem of teaching and learning approach reflected in the studying quality and efficiency. For example, when the students go to school, they must be under the teachers' control. Learning focuses on the good studying achievements whereas the students must follow the teachers until they have no analytic cognition and discretion. Such cognition is so important as it helps the students have the cognitive growth, eager in learning, and happiness in knowing, self-awareness, and understanding other people. Teaching and learning approach according to Tri-Sikkha can resolve these problems because it makes the students have precepts or discipline and meditation in studying. However, the previous teaching and learning approach according to Tri-Sikkha could not solve this problem, that is, to make learners be good persons, and have wisdom. Therefore, the Researcher was interested in studying the moderate postmodern



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taught to his followers. From the evidence in Tripitaka, Tri-Sikkha is explained in "Duttiasikkhattaya Sutta on Tisikkha Sutta 2 (Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya, 1996, 319) that Bikkhus, for three sikkha, what do they include? They consist of: 1. Adhisila sikkha; 2. Adhicitta sikkha; and 3. Adhipanna sikkha. 1. Adhisila sikkha is that monks in the norm and discipline have precepts, etc. Undertaking and training in the disciplinary rule is called Adhisila sikkha. 2. How about Adhicitta sikkha? It is the monks in the norm and discipline seclude from all sensual pleasures, etc. and they attain Catutatajhana which is neither painful nor pleasant and includes the purification of mindfulness by equanimity. This is called Adhicitta sikkha. 3. How about Adhipanna sikkha. It is monks in the norm and discipline are gone into Cetovimutti (deliverance of mind), Pannavimutti (liberation through wisdom) with no mental intoxication eradicated by wisdom, access into the present condition called Adhipanna sikkha. Bikkhus, these 3 sikkha.

1. Phra Dhamma Kosajan (Buddhadasa Bhikkhu) mentioned about Tisikkha that it was the religious training stages under 3 steps:

1.1 First Sikkha or Training is sila (precept), which means the good conduct according to general principles, divided into Sila 5, Sila 8, Sila 10, and Sila 227, etc.

1.2 Second Sikkha is Samadhi (meditation), e.g., retaining our mind in the status of making the most interest as we want. For the actual meaning of meditation, the Buddha said "kammaniyo" which means ready to work or activeness and it is the final word the Buddha explained about the characteristics of concentrated mind.

1.3 Third Sikkha is Panna (wisdom), which means the training to have the most right and complete knowledge and understanding in everything on reality (Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, 1978: 55-56).

When Buddhadasa Bhikkhu interpreted the precepts, he included the rule and regulations established by the society. For precepts, meditation, and wisdom, Buddhadasa Bhikkhu interpreted respectively and clearly that one had to start from Silasikkha, followed by Samadhisikkha, and Pannasikkha respectively.

2. Adjunct Professor Somdet Phra Buddhaghosacariya (P.A. Payutto) mentioned about Tri-Sikkha that when Sammaditthi (Right View) is the core pillar and base, the learning process



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in each person would go on. This process may be divided into 3 major stages called Tri-Sikkha, which is the Buddhist study (Buddha means the awakened and enlightened person), comprising 3 characteristics on the same pillar, that is, wisdom improved to be more refined in the nice mind, and happiness and strong power based on meditation. The supporting behavior with other humans and environment originates the integrated study in 3 aspects called Tri-Sikkha, including:

2.1 Silasikkha or training in behavior, discipline, physical, verbal, and occupational honesty, which is called Adhisilasikkha.

2.2 Cittasikkha or mental training, cultivation of morality, promotion of mental quality, performance, and health, which is called Adhicittasikkha.

2.3 Pannasikkha or wisdom training to have the right knowledge and understanding about many things on reality and factors so that problems can be solved by reasons. One will be wisely aware of the world and life until one's mind is purified and released from any attachment. His sensual pleasures and suffering would be extinguished and, and he lives by free and bright mind. This is called Adhipannasikkha.

These three training principles (precepts, meditation, and wisdom) will occur and must be practiced together and they cannot be separated. When one or a group does an activity, either before or after doing it, it must involve 3 following parts:

Part 1: Precept. It is the relationship with the external world by considering whether our behavior and actions would take advantage or make anyone in trouble or not.

Part 2: Mind. We must observe our mind when we are doing this activity. Which intent or objectives, inspiration do we have? Do we have the good wish, desire to help or have malice? Do we have the joyful or gloomy mind, happy or sad?

Part 3: Wisdom or knowledge and understanding. We must check whether we know and understand what we are doing or not. Is this action done relevantly to the cause and effect? Will it lead the result we want? What advantages and disadvantages will we have after doing it?

It could be concluded from such interpretation that all 3 parts could be improved in every activity. Education is in all activities of life because Buddhism trains everyone to study



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other people in the daily life. Even eating and living must be studied. Tri-Sikkha as interpreted by Adjunct Professor Somdet Phra Buddhaghosacariya consists of 3 aspects that must be developed simultaneously together with our daily activities, or we may use wisdom and mind in our precept practice.

3. Samana Bhodirak (Rak Rakpong) gave his concept in studying Tri-Sikkha in his dhamma lecture. The Dhamma Practitioner Club summarized it to be “Behavior of Precepts 5”. Samana Bhodirak explained and interpreted Adhisila, Adhicitta, Adhipanna by first prioritizing the precepts. which means through Precepts, people go for happiness. Through Precepts, people go for good fortune. Through Precepts, people attain the extinction of passion. Therefore, let them purify their Precepts. The teaching of Samana Bhodirak would focus on precepts, explain about and interpret precepts in his book entitled “Extracted from Precepts”

The meaning of Precepts 5 has some details focusing that “selfishness is an origin of precept breaking” Meditation comes from intention to observe the precepts, and not to break precepts. We must have wisdom to read our mind. Behavior and practice must go along together, and not be separated. The observance of precepts is not only defined as the physical and bodily observation, but also mental observation. The observation of precepts to enhance the result of merit needs the proper conduct governed by consciousness and meditation until it goes on normally. The conduct in line with the social rules will help stop our bad behavior. The students who have been developed to observe the presents will be familiar with the rules and discipline pursuant to the concept that, if having the good discipline, it is easy to make the students adhere to the merit, and stop their bad thought and misconduct.

Meditation is the mental focus. It means the condition of mind that is calm, stable, paying attention to one point so long, which is the character of one-pointedness of mind called “Cittasasekaggata” or shorted called “Ekaggata” that means a condition or one-pointed of mind. Sense-fields mean what connect our senses via eye, ear, nose, tongue, physical body, and mind, which include the visible objects, sound, smell, taste, tangible objects and mind-objects. When these sense fields are touched; this may be the origin of passion, that is, it induces Abhijiha (covetousness). Some may be the origin of Dosa or anger. Some may be the



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origin of Moha or delusion. Therefore, one’s mind will not be calm, stable, and muddle by those senses until one’s mind cannot concentrate. But, if those senses cannot be deviated, but being calm at any point, mind will be focused. Apart from concentration, meditation must be pure and ready to work. Meditation is to train our mind to work properly and efficiently. Depth, refinement, completeness and concentration of concentrated mind is mentioned in “Maha-cattarisaka sutta”, “Suttantapitaka Majjihimanikaya Upparipunnasa” that:

“Lord Buddha said that “Bhikkhus, I will show you Samma-samadhi of noble monks, which involves elements. Listen to Samma-samadhi.

“...Samma-samadhi of noble monks comprises of Samma-ditthi, Samma-sankappa, Samma-vaca, Samma-kammanta, Samma-ajiva, Samma-vayama, Samma-sati. Bhikkhus, one-pointedness mind consists of these 7 elements called Samma-sati of noble monks...”

The above interpretation could indicate that meditation is not to sit calmly without thinking, but Samma-samadhi is a daily practice or practice based on Eight Noble Paths, that is, “one-pointedness mind involving these 7 elements is called “Samma-samadhi”. It is apparent that Samma-samadhi of noble monks is to observe the Eight Noble Paths. Samana Bhodirak explained about meditation called Samma-samadhi comes from the practice on 7 noble paths; namely, Samma-sankappa, Samma-vaca, Samma-kammanta, and Samma-ajiva, all are the practice while they are supervised by Samma-ditthi, Samma-sati, and Samma-vayama. The result will be the right mindfulness or Samma-samadhi. He interpreted that it is not the sitting by closing eyes, but the daily practice where we have our work and occupation.

The Researcher analyzed the meditation steps to be applied in providing the teaching and learning under school contexts, and in providing learning the senses and mental conditions such as pleasure, anger, etc. The learners would know the meditation principle to be applied in all activities and occupations. Most Buddhist schools have usually trained the learners to have the sitting-meditation. However, meditation may be practiced by different methods. Meditation practice with working, meditation practice with activities such as drawing or artistic works could make the students have calm mind, are cautious, control their talks and actions in their daily life while working or doing various activities.



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Philosophical paradigm is the thought, belief, and learning of people in various paradigms. People’s learning in 5 paradigms is similar and different, that is, 1) primitive philosophical paradigm is the comparative learning from experiences obtained; 2) ancient philosophical paradigm is the learning by experience that would be used to claim the concluded rule or by comparing between experience and rule; 3) medieval philosophical paradigm is the learning by dividing rules into 2 types, that is, rules in this present world and those in the next world with a belief that rules could support the next world while learning could come from thinking, experience, and practice according to rules under religion or head or leader; 4) modern philosophical paradigm is he learning through scientific rules, that is, rule setting, rule proving, and rule accepting after being proved; and 5) moderate post-modern philosophical paradigm is the learning by using all types of learning with more details, e.g., cognitive learning, life-long learning, and learning for developing the quality of life.

The post-modern paradigm is the paradigm under spiritual perspectives in the meaning that everything must be analyzed, evaluated, and applied. because the World War II is a big lesson of humankind when there were many people who died in the war, were injured, and suffering due to scientific advance. Immanuel Kant has been proposed at the beginning of the 19th century as a pavement for the postmodern era since Year 1800 that “Not be fascinated by science because it does not give us any fact, but interest (objective). We must apply science to serve humans under the scope of morality and religion, which must depend on human’s mutual awareness. We should use other academic matters to judge morality and religion because they give some knowledge that cannot be proved that it is factual. However, it may be fixed by brain mechanism. But, as it passes through the brain mechanism, it has been transformed until we cannot know what is factual. Various academic matters are useful, but they must be used under morality” (Kirati Boonchua, 2002 b, page 186). All types of learning can be used, but other details must be added such as cognitive learning, life-long learning, learning for developing of the quality of life, etc. This paradigm accepts all types of learning.



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Results

The result indicated that the teaching and learning approach according to Tri-Sikkha subject to Buddhist philosophy in the moderate postmodern paradigm was consistent and flexible learning, that is, it did not focus on contents, but skills in knowledge acquisition. It opens for the creation of new knowledge, adaptation, collaboration, and seeking for working methods to attain the goals. This research result was consistent with the concept of Somdet Phra Buddhaghosacariya (P.A. Payutto) and Samana Bhodirak (Rak Rakpong), which can be applied in the learner-focused teaching and learning approach consistently and on balance. The meanings of teaching and learning approach according to Tri-Sikkha are as follows. 1. Adhisila sikkha - In the teaching and learning approach for learners, there would be certain practice guideline, rules and regulations in class and in school or they were called the learners' discipline. 2. Adhicitta sikkha or Samadhi sikkha. There were 2 methods for learners. The first method was the sitting meditation when the learners sit, closed eyes, and recited Buddho or other words, or they might recite nothing. The purpose was to make the learners calm and observe their mind. The training may be done in other methods such as walking slowly with clear consciousness, e.g. The second method was the meditation and working. It was Samma-samadhi in the Eight Noble Paths. The learners could do various activities normally, but they were aware of their emotions, could retain and control emotions. They could observe their emotions whenever any touch occurred. 3. Adhipanna sikkha meant that the learners were trained to have wisdom by: 1. practicing the cognitive thinking, that is, analysis, appreciation, and application; and 2. practicing how to observe, listen to, and present the thought. The learners would observe those emotions while using their wisdom in self-instruction; 3. practicing at the same time by releasing bad emotions from mind; 3. pressing the merit power or absorbing good things from what we saw in the activity, e.g. gratitude, sacrifice, patience, bravery, etc., and allowing those merits to absorb in mind; 4. practicing how to get up to the media, technology, world, and society; and 5. adding Bahussuta (great learning) or being persons who read, know, listen, and are active to know more.

From interpreting Tri-Sikkha and education philosophies, it was found that every education philosophy had the teaching and learning approach consistently with Tri-Sikkha.



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Discussion

1. Interpretation of Tri-Sikkha for teaching and learning approach subject to the moderate postmodern philosophy

Tri-Sikkha is the Buddhist education in 3 parts: 1) Sila sikkha or training in respect with conduct, discipline, physical, verbal, and occupational honesty called Adhisila sikkha; 2) Citta sikkha or mental training, cultivation of morality, promotion of the quality, performance, and mental health called Adhicitta sikkha; and 3) Panna sikkha or intelligent training in order to have knowledge and understanding everything based on reality and factors so that problems can be solved by reasons. One will be wisely aware of the world and life until one's mind is purified and released from any attachment. This is called Adhipanna sikkha. These three parts must be trained together simultaneously.

Conclusion and Recommendation

From Interpreting "Teaching and learning approach according to Tri-Sikkha based on Moderate Postmodern Philosophy Paradigm", it was found that after applying Tri-Sikkha in teaching and learning approach based on moderate postmodern philosophy paradigm, teaching and learning approach fell into place. The learning process has been adjusted, so the learners did not feel bored, and they would have the habit of knowledge acquisition. Thus, this model of teaching and learning approach can be the education solutions, that is, learners would be developed to be good and happy people. For intelligence, the learners would be able to have the cognitive thinking, and analyze to find out their quotients. The meditation training also took the learners to observe their mind so they could be aware of their quotient or competence. This moderate postmodern philosophy makes the viewpoints in developing the quality of education and quality of life complete pursuant to the requirement of education management.

Suggestions for further applications

1. Any persons applying the moderate postmodern philosophy should understand all 5 paradigms because the moderate postmodern philosophy was developed from those 4



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paradigms. If being applied by full understanding, the application will be under confidence and efficiency.

2. The result of this study can be used by every religion because knowledge and merit of religious teaching are universal. In particular, the moderate postmodern philosophy selects only good points for further applications with no adherence. This is to develop the quality of life, and to create good things in the world and the society.

3. To be applied for learners at different ages and levels of education, the learners must be first analyzed to ensure the appropriate and efficient outcome.

Recommendations for further studies

1. Teaching and learning approach according to Tri-Sikkha based on moderate postmodern philosophy should be studied and developed in the form of the experimental research or research and development.

2. The moderate postmodern philosophy to be applied with other types of teaching and learning approach should be studied.

Acknowledgement

This research article was completed by supports from the teachers in the Philosophy and Ethics Program of Suan Sunundha Rajabhat University, as well as other supporters, and those who have helped and inspired the Research to make research, and Chairman of the Thesis Committee who has paid much attention to give advice and alter all errors. The Researcher recognizes the strong intention and contributions of every teacher, and would like to extend my gratitude to them.

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