

**DETERMINING THE RELATIONSHIP OF JOYFUL
EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENTS TO LEARNING
MOTIVATION, EDUCATIONAL ATTACHMENT AND LACK OF
ATTENTION DEFICIT (CASE STUDY: THE ATTITUDES OF
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS OF THE CITY OF ISFAHAN)**

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Abstract

The present study was an attempt to determine the relationship of joyful educational environments to learning motivation, educational attachment, and lack of attention deficit. The population comprised all elementary school teachers of the city of Isfahan in the school year 2014-2015. The study was a descriptive-correlational enquiry where 371 participants were randomly selected as sample using multistage cluster random sampling. The tools comprised: (1) the researcher-made questionnaire of joyful educational environments, (2) the researcher-made questionnaire of learning motivation, (3) the researcher-made questionnaire of educational attachment, and (4) the researcher-made questionnaire of lack of attention deficit. Data collection was done through library and field studies. Data were analyzed using Pearson correlation tests and stepwise multiple regression analysis. In general, the findings revealed that there is a significant relationship between joyful educational environment and learning motivation (based on internal and external factors) at $P < 0.05$ level; there is a significant relationship between joyful educational environment and educational attachment (attachment to the teacher, class or school) at $P < 0.05$ level; and there is also a significant relationship between joyful educational environment and lack of attention deficit (before lesson and during lesson) at $P < 0.05$ level.

Keywords: *Joyful educational environment, learning motivation, educational attachment, lack of attention deficit.*

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Introduction

To make the school a joyful place provides an appropriate environment and creates more physical space. However, making the schools a joyful place does not only concern the physical aspects, since having mental health requires the observation of some principles which have both material and spiritual aspects. In fact, joyfulness must be ought both in physical and spiritual dimensions. Investigation of each of these dimensions includes important subjects and elements which, if taken into consideration, can help increase the joyfulness of the soul and body of the teenagers. That is because teenagers must first feel the joy inside. This joyfulness is the feeling of satisfaction with life which must penetrate into all the dimensions of the teenager's life (Bainbridge, 2010). To make the school a joyful place provides an appropriate environment and creates more physical space. It includes appropriate beatification of school buildings by harmonizing tiles, ceramics and stones, painting the walls and doors, using pretty curtains in the classrooms, beatifying the corridors, teacher offices, etc. The study by Mahmoudian (2004) showed that making the schools a joyful place does not only concern the physical aspects, since having mental health requires the observation of some principles which have both material and spiritual aspects. Strategies to create a joyful environment for the students include: (1) establishing a reward bank for students and issuing reward cards for them, (2) holding joyful celebrations and different contests, (3) strengthening and developing scientific and recreational field trips, (4) holding various exhibitions of research activities relating to educational issues with the help of the students, (5) having morning exercises as a group before class, (6) inviting the school's successful students to speak before the students, (7) appreciating and encouraging the activities which may not be appreciated by others, (8) making the school environment beautiful and attractive by using happy colors in the classrooms and corridors, (9) paying attention to student's personal hygiene, (10) participation of students' parents in the school affairs, (11) avoiding stress in the school, (12) avoiding punishment, insult, blame, and humiliation in the school, (13) implementing active teaching methods aimed at increasing class joyfulness, (14) putting the pictures of top students on the bulletin board, (15) paying special attention to the break time, (16) showing films and slides at school, (17) promoting art activities (show group, song group) at school, (18) active presence of joyful teachers with appropriate, elegant appearance, (19) avoiding indiscipline and injustice in the school, (20) fostering hope for the future in

students, (21) investigating factors leading to students' educational failure and dropping out, (22) promoting mutual respect between students and the schools employees, (23) providing postcards on the birthday of each of the students and even teachers, (24) distributing candies among the students on different occasions such as celebrations and the birthdays of the Holy Imams.

Theoretical framework

Providing a joyful educational environment for the students has always been a serious concern for the policy makers and planners of the education system. Students enjoy the environments which is happy and joyful. And such an environment leads to considerable scientific attainment by increasing student's motivation. A joyful educational environment prevents absence, untimeliness, class boredom, mental and physical ailments and, above all, educational failure (Kraft, 2008). According to Marshall Reeve (1995), happiness is a positive feeling which results from the sense of satisfaction and success. Happiness is one of the basic needs of life and a factor for progress and success. Psychologists consider happiness as the result of harmonious, cohesive and organized functioning of all the emotions of the individual. They believe that Joyfulness lays the foundation for the burgeoning of thought and reason (Eskandari, 2007). Studies by Gholami and Chari (2011) demonstrated that students' joyfulness is significantly related to their interaction with the teacher and their self-efficacy. Studies by Ja'fari and Talebzadeh (2010) showed that physical, social-emotional and educational objectives affect the happiness and joyfulness of elementary schools. In their studies, ZareiMatin et al. (2009) showed that a joyfulness educational environment increases the concentration of the learners and decreases their confusion and distress. It also affects the cognitive processes such as memory, problem solving and intellectual flexibility. According to Kozma (2005), a joyful educational system has a considerable impact of the progress of the students and bolsters their morale. Previous research (Shochet and Smyth, 2009; Ladd and Dinella, 2009; Karcher, Holcomb and Zambrano, 2008) showed that school attractiveness increases students' attachment to the school. The findings made by Abbasi (2004) demonstrated that environment affects students' joyfulness and performance. Arthur et al. (1993) state that the physical condition of the classroom such as use of happy, bright colors as well as the development of the schools green space are

effective in increasing students' attachment to their school. Studies by Krater (2008) demonstrated that a joyful teaching-learning environment reduces students' inattention to the lessons and involves them in the learning process. Cohen and Hill (2001), as quoted in Fordikson(1998) stated that happiness and joy are a part of success which leads to playing and entertainment and lays the foundation for physical, social and mental skills. Also, interest results in discovery and expansion of knowledge. A joyful school can bring about with the joy of life for the students. A happy and joyful environment is effective in learning and realization of students' talents and doubles their energy. Students' happiness and joyfulness depends on the existence of attractive, desirable and joyful schools (Alyasin, 2001). Joozaqi (2001) founded that students' educational attainment is positively related to the presence of happiness and security at school. Wolk (2008) in "Joy in School" states that: Principles such as presenting the students' work, assigning a time to playing, making the schools an attractive place, the presence of good books to read, holding sport and art classes, changing the evaluation system, and playing together increases the students' willingness to go to school.

Hypotheses

1. There is a significant relationship between joyful educational environment and learning motivation.
2. There is a significant relationship between joyful educational environment and educational attachment.
3. There is a significant relationship between joyful educational environment and lack of attention deficit.

Method

The population comprised all elementary school teachers of the city of Isfahan in the school year 2014-2015. The study was a descriptive-correlational enquiry where 371 participants were randomly selected as sample using multistage cluster random sampling. The tools comprised: (1) the researcher-made questionnaire of joyful educational environments, (2) the researcher-made questionnaire of learning motivation, (3) the researcher-made questionnaire of educational attachment, and

(4) the researcher-made questionnaire of lack of attention deficit. Data collection was done through library and field studies. Data were analyzed using Pearson correlation tests and stepwise multiple regression analysis.

Table 1. Reliability coefficient of the questionnaires

No.	Questionnaire	Number of items	Reliability coefficient
1	researcher-made questionnaire of joyful educational environments	15	0.93
2	researcher-made questionnaire of learning motivation	11	0.89
3	researcher-made questionnaire of educational attachment	8	0.91
4	researcher-made questionnaire of lack of attention deficit	14	0.95

Findings

Hypothesis 1. There is a significant relationship between joyful educational environment and learning motivation (based on internal and external factors).

Table 1. Stepwise multiple regressions for the prediction of learning motivation (internal and external factors) based on joyful educational environments

	β	Std. error	β	t	sig	R	R^2	ΔR^2	F	sig
Stage 1 Constant Learning motivation	0/636 0/295	0/564 0/486	0/421	4/328 3/426	0/001 0/001	0/428	0/183	0/525	537/538	0/001

based on internal factors										
Stage 2 Constant coefficient	3/227 0/85	0/635 0/379	0/235	3/735 4/248	0/001 0/001					
Learning motivation based on internal factors	0/226	0/623	0/634	5/372	0/001					
Learning motivation based on external factors						0/634	0/401	0/423	743/321	0/001

Based on the results presented in the Table 1, there is a significant relationship between joyful educational environment and learning motivation (based on internal and external factors) at $P < 0.05$ level. Based on the beta coefficient, 1 unit of increase in the joyfulness of educational environment results in 0.23 unit of increase in learning motivation based on internal factors, and 0.63 unit of increase in learning motivation based on external factors. The findings also reveal that joyful educational environment accounts for 19% of the variance of learning motivation based on internal factors and 40% of the variance of learning motivation based on the external factors.

Hypothesis 2. There is a significant relationship between joyful educational environment and educational attachment (attachment to teacher, class and school).

Table 2. Stepwise multiple regression for the prediction of educational attachment (attachment to teacher, class and school) based on joyful educational environments

	β	Sted.e rror	β eta	t	Sig	R	R^2	ΔR^2	F	sig
Stage 1 Constant coefficient	0/638 0/673	0/531 0/426	0/653	3/682 3/521	0/001 0/001					
Educational attachment based on						0/432	0/186	0/512	526/542	0/001

teacher										
Stage 2 Constant	0/346	0/337		4/877	0/001					
coefficient	0/789	0/744	0/372	5/354	0/001					
Educational attachment based on teacher	0/583	0/283	0/329	3/263	0/001	0/428	0/183	0/687	525/854	0/001
Educational attachment based on class										
Stage 3 Constant	0/568	0/485		4/743	0/001					
coefficient	0/425	0/382	0/879	5/627	0/001					
Educational attachment based on teacher	0/342	0/237	0/572	3/428	0/001					
Educational attachment based on class	0/487	0/269	0/485	3/465	0/001	0/631	0/398	0/436	435/527	0/001
Educational attachment based on school										

Based on the results presented in the Table 2, there is a significant relationship between joyful educational environment and educational attachment (attachment to the teacher, class and school) at $P < 0.05$ level. Based on the beta coefficient, 1 unit of increase in the joyfulness of educational environment results in 0.87 unit of increase in educational attachment based on the teacher, 0.58 unit of increase in educational attachment based on the class, and 0.49 unit of increase in educational attachment based on the school. The findings also reveal that joyful educational environment accounts for 19% of the variance of educational attachment based on the teacher, 40% of the variance of educational attachment based on the class, and 39% of educational attachment based on the school.

Hypothesis 3. There is a significant relationship between joyful educational environment and lack of attention deficit (when entering the lesson and during the lesson).

Table 1. Stepwise multiple regressions for the prediction of lack of attention deficit (when entering the lesson and during the lesson) based on joyful educational environments

	β	Sted.e rror	β eta	t	Sig	R	R^2	ΔR^2	F	sig
Stage 1										
Constant coefficient	0/673	0/742		3/489	0/001					
Lack of attention deficit when entering the lesson	0/345	0/492	0/385	3/621	0/001	0/570	0/324	0/528	438/605	0/001
Stage 2										
Constant coefficient	3840	0/312		4/623	0/001					
Lack of attention deficit when entering the lesson	0/463	0/319	0/521	5/761	0/001					
Lack of attention deficit during the lesson	0/327	0/710	0/519	3/478	0/001	0/618	0/381	0/427	673/941	0/001

Based on the results presented in the Table 3, there is a significant relationship between joyful educational environment and lack of attention deficit (when entering the lesson and during the lesson) at $P < 0.05$ level. Based on the beta coefficient, 1 unit of increase in the joyfulness of educational environment results in 0.52 unit of increase in lack of attention deficit when entering the lesson, and 0.51 unit of increase in attention deficit during lesson. The findings also reveal that joyful educational environment accounts for 32% of the variance of attention deficit when entering the lesson and 38% of the variance of attention deficit during the lesson.

Discussion and conclusion

Students enjoy the environments and spaces which cause happiness and joy, and as a result, they have greater motivation in such environments and considerable scientific achievement. Joyful educational environment prevents absence, lateness,

class boredom, mental and physical ailments and educational failure (Kraft, 2008). With respect to the first hypothesis, the result of the present study indicated a positive relationship between the joyful educational environment and learning motivation (based on internal and external factors) at $P < 0.05$ level. Joozeqi (2001) found that students' educational attainment is positively related to happiness, joy, and security in school. Students' happiness and joyfulness depends on the presence of attractive, desirable and joyful schools (Alyasin, 2001). Regarding the second hypotheses, the findings showed that there is a significant relationship between joyful educational environment and educational attachment (attachment to the teacher, class and school) at $P < 0.05$ level. Studies by Gholami and Chari demonstrated that students' joyfulness has a significant relationship to their interaction with their teacher and their self-efficacy. Previous research (Shochet and Smyth, 2009; Ladd and Dinella, 2009; Karcher, Holcomb and Zambrano, 2008) showed that school attractiveness increases students' attachment to the school. Wolk (2008) in "Joy in School" states that: Principles such as presenting the students' work, assigning a time to playing, making the schools an attractive place, the presence of good books to read, holding sport and art classes, changing the evaluation system, and playing together increases the students' willingness to go to school. With regard to the third hypothesis, the results demonstrated that there is a significant relationship between joyful educational environment and lack of attention deficit (when entering the lesson and during the lesson). Studies by ZareiMatin et al. (2009) showed that a joyfulness educational environment increases the concentration of the learners and decreases their confusion and distress. It also affects the cognitive processes such as memory, problem solving and intellectual flexibility. The findings made by Abbasi (2004) demonstrated that environment affects students' joyfulness and performance.. Arthur et al. (1993) state that the physical condition of the classroom such as use of happy, bright colors as well as the development of the schools green space are effective in increasing students' attachment to their school. Studies by Krater (2008) demonstrated that a joyful teaching-learning environment reduces students' inattention to the lessons and involves them in the learning process.

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