

# Characteristics of a lovely school from the perspective of students and teachers

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## Abstract

This study was conducted to investigate the features of a lovely school from the perspective of school students and teachers of Lorestan province. Results obtained showed that eight factors were identified from the perspective of students in various academic courses and in other words, the features of a lovely school from the perspective of school students and teachers of Lorestan province including exhilarating factors, suitable hygienic condition, emotional and social needs and interests, students participation in school management, paying attention to beautification of the school environment, emphasis on students, more affection to school, promoting the culture of collaborative learning and teaching and suitable spaces and facilities for playing and entertainment. Also, another factor was identified from the perspective of school teachers of Lorestan province as considering the social and welfare status of teachers. Generally, nine factors were identified from the perspective of school students and teachers of Lorestan province that can be considered as characteristic of a lovely school in Lorestan province.

**Keywords:** characteristics, school, lovely, Lorestan

## Introduction

In new era of education, having backgrounds more than a century in today's modern world, education was strongly influenced by psychological findings. Attitudes toward student were completely changed. From this perspective, students would be successful when education emphasizes students' needs and personality in center of their search. Teachers also communicate directly with school

issues and actually feel the bottlenecks (Shabani, 1994) and play a major role in students' education. On the other hand, the creation of a happy and joyful environment for students and teachers at the school has always been one of the main objectives of practitioners of Ministry of education. A school that has had the space, facilities and psychological features fit to students and teachers (Farshad, 2003). Certainly, there are schools in education of Lorestan province that have not had features of a lovely school. Therefore, considering comments and ideas of teachers and students in relation to the criteria and features of a lovely school can be examined in the process of scientific research.

## *Statement of the Problem and Significance of Study*

Based on the human-oriented approach to children and adolescents, recognition of needs, interests, and attitudes should be considered to develop the educational programs. Teachers are another resource for understanding the needs who have direct connection with students. As Dilla Piana and Gag in a research concluded that only teacher's attitude should not be considered, but also the relationship between teacher's attitudes and student's attitudes is important. Therefore, these two collections should be interactively accorded in practice until success can be achieved (Getzels *et al.*, 2004).

Although many countries in the world are using various tools and methods to create a spirit of joy and happiness in order to make students interested in school, the results of some conducted researches indicate that the existence of some astringency in schools that forces students to silence and disinterest to lesson and school. What are the students' and teachers' reaction if they hear from the mass media that tomorrow is a holiday? Maybe, they will be happy. Indeed, whether an environment in which

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the holiday takes place plays a role in making teachers and students happy. We wanted to see whether it is necessary to revise our attitudes, whether our schools have been converted into a prison with hard labor. In this regard, paying attention to the features of a lovely school has particular importance to achieve this goal, a school with physical, material and spiritual characteristics. By considering these features, the causes of the teachers, students and their parents' participation at the school management, promoting the culture of training and learning, improving the teachers and staff's social, economic and living conditions, providing the social and emotional needs of students, staff and teachers affection towards each other and school will be provided. Obviously, lack of attention to the features of a lovely school would not follow the above-mentioned cases.

### *Research objective*

In this research, identifying the characteristics of lovely school from the perspective of school teachers and students of Lorestan province has been considered as the main purpose of this study.

### *Research questions*

- What are the features of a lovely school from the perspective of teachers of Lorestan province?
- What are the features of a lovely school from the perspective of elementary school students of Lorestan province?
- What are the features of a lovely school from the perspective of guidance school students of Lorestan province?
- What are the features of a lovely school from the perspective of high school students of Lorestan province?

### **Methodology**

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According to the research method, the present research is descriptive and in terms of study, it is related to the survey. In this study, among 174,975 elementary students, 200 subjects, among 133977 guidance school students, 202 subjects, among 110929 high school students, 252 subjects and among 16,821 teachers, 384 subjects were selected by random sampling method as the statistical sample. Totally, among the desired clusters, 1038 participants (654 students and 384 teachers) were selected and the questionnaires were distributed, completed and

collected among them. For each of the three academic periods of students one questionnaire was separately devoted. Totally, three questionnaires were developed for the students and one questionnaire was developed for all teachers. Validity of the measurement tools was carried out by validation of the content and based on the experts' opinions and experienced teachers. Reliability of the mentioned tools was obtained for the elementary students, respectively: 0.96 for guidance school, 0.97 for high school, 0.95 for teachers through calculating Cronbach's alpha coefficient.

### **Discussion and Conclusion**

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The factor analysis method, a type of principal components analysis was used for analysis of research questions. After the distribution, completion and collection of the questionnaires and extracting results and recording data, the factor analysis was performed. After examining the correlation rate of questions, except the question 19 in elementary group, questions 19 and 41 in guidance group, the question 89 in high school group and questions 4-8 - 13 - 14 - 30 - 36 and 49 in teachers groups, other questions had necessary conditions for subsequent review. Then, the adequacy of sampling was considered. Also, Bartlett's test result showed the significant correlations. Another point, the factor loadings of at least 0.4 and Varimax rotation was used in this study.

The aware, healthy, competent and responsible manpower is considered as the most important and major factors in the process of economic, social and cultural development. Therefore, training of future generations, especially children and adolescents, is important. Also, the improvement and promotion of education quality has always been considered as the top priority and the creation of better conditions for students' teaching and learning are often educational practitioners' demands. Therefore, identifying the characteristics of a lovely school from the perspective of students and teachers of different academic courses are considered as the first key to achieve the success. The present study was conducted based on such presupposition. Certainly, by identifying the characteristics of a lovely school and then attempt to fulfill the desired criteria, school and learning environment can be converted to a happy and pleasant environment for students and teachers.

Here, it is tried to examine the features of lovely school from the perspective of the studied groups. It is necessary to explain that the obtained results in most cases were consistent with findings and statements of other institutions, authors and researchers (Sohrabi et al, 1986), the school organization in any country (1993). Merchant (1997), Majdfar (2001), Fathi & Ajargah (2002), Farhadiyan (2002), Farshad (2003), Rouhi (2006), Zahedi (2006) have also mentioned different perspectives about the lovely school's features.

### *The features of a lovely school from the perspective of school students and teachers of Lorestan province*

Here the results obtained from factor analysis before and after rotation are shown in separate tables for each the studied groups. As table 1 shows, in elementary school, the first factor measures approximately 12.7%, the second factor 9%, the third factor 8.9%, the fourth factor 8.8%, the fifth factor 8.7%, the sixth factor 8.4%, the seventh factor 8.4%, the eighth factor 8% and totally 73.277% measures the total variance.

**Table 1. The results of the eight factors analysis of the elementary school.**

Special value after rotation	Special value before rotation	Factor	Row
12.701	15.948	exhilarating factors	1
9.045	9.535	suitable hygienic condition	2
8.913	8.714	emotional and social needs and interests of students	3
8.870	8.284	students participation in school management	4
8.780	7.953	Pay attention to beautification of the school environment	5
8.434	7.717	emphasis on students more affection to the school	6
8.433	7.627	promoting the culture of collaborative learning and teaching	7
8.100	7.399	suitable spaces and facilities for playing and entertainment	8

**Table 2. The results of the eight factors analysis of the guidance school.**

Special value after rotation	Special value before rotation	Factor	Row
12.689	14.420	exhilarating factors	1
11.027	11.300	suitable hygienic condition	2
9.214	9.767	emotional and social needs and interests of students	3
8.876	8.881	students participation in school management	4
8.762	7.696	Pay attention to beautification of the school environment	5
8.244	7.665	emphasis on students more affection to the school	6
7.923	7.553	promoting the culture of collaborative learning and teaching	7
7.706	7.259	suitable spaces and facilities for playing and entertainment	8

As table 2 shows, in guidance school, the first factor measures approximately 12.6%, the second factor 11%, the third factor 9.2%, the fourth factor 8.8%, the fifth factor 8.7%, the sixth factor 8.2%, the seventh factor 7.9%, the eighth factor 8.7% and totally 74.542% measures the total variance.

As table 3 shows, in high school, the first factor measures approximately 13%, the second factor 13%, the third factor 11.9%, the fourth factor 8%, the fifth factor 7.7%, the sixth factor 7.6%, the seventh factor 7.4%, the eighth factor 6.3% and totally 76.193% measures the total variance.

**Table 3. The results of the eight factors analysis of the high school.**

Special value after rotation	Special value before rotation	Factor	Row
13.097	16.046	exhilarating factors	1
13.065	13.663	suitable hygienic condition	2
11.931	11.077	emotional and social needs and interests of students	3
8.013	7.853	students participation in school management	4
7.722	7.553	Pay attention to beautification of the school environment	5
7.606	6.891	emphasis on students more affection in school	6
7.449	6.648	promoting the culture of collaborative learning and teaching	7
6.309	6.462	suitable spaces and facilities for playing and entertainment	8

**Table 4. The results of the ninth factors analysis of teachers.**

Special value after rotation	Special value before rotation	Factor	Raw
12.983	23.185	exhilarating factors	1
12.579	9.274	suitable hygienic condition	2
8.785	7.628	emotional and social needs and interests of students	3
8.602	6.976	Students' participation in school management	4
7.299	6.332	Pay attention to beautification of the school environment	5
7.264	6.075	emphasis on students more affection to school	6
6.420	6.028	considering the social and welfare status of teachers	7
6.379	5.563	promoting the culture of collaborative learning and teaching	8
6.103	5.352	028/6 suitable spaces and facilities for playing and entertainment	9

As table 4 shows, in teachers group, the first factor approximately 12.9%, the second factor 12.5%, the third factor 8.7%, the fourth factor 8.6%, the fifth factor 7.2%, the sixth factor 7.2%, the seventh factor 6.4%, the eighth factor 6.3% and the ninth factor 6.1 and totally 76.413% measures the total variance.

It was observed that the features of a lovely school from the perspective of students were separately specified in eighth factors. These factors include exhilarating factors, suitable hygienic condition, emotional and social needs and interests, students participation in school management, paying attention to beautification of the school environment, emphasis on students more affection to school, promoting the culture of collaborative learning and teaching and suitable spaces and facil-

ities for playing and entertainment and in addition to the above eight factors, another factor was identified from the perspective of teachers as paying attention to the social and welfare status of teachers.

### **Physical and material features or hygiene factor**

A. Paying attention to school beautification: components related to this factor from perspective of students and teachers include beautiful facade of the school, painting the school facade with cheerful colors, putting happy and attractive board and pictures in the school environment, using the spectacular boards and images from Lorestan province in school, putting vases filled with flowers in the corridors and classrooms, painting classes, existence of green space and planting trees in parts of the school

yard, using sturdy and standard materials in the school building, designing school building plans based on Iranian architecture.

B. Inappropriate hygienic condition: components related to this factor from perspective of students and teachers include a healthy heating and cooling equipment of school, safe drinking water faucets of school, adequate hygienic drinking water, adequate water dispenser for the use of students, existence of devoted toilet for teachers, existence of required soap and liquid soap in the school toilet, enough trash in the school environment, existence of buffets and clean and hygienic store in the school, using whiteboard and marker instead of blackboard and chalk, cleaning school not with oil, thinking about strategies to keep the school clean every day, daily disinfection of school toilet, daily cleaning of school desks and chairs, keeping away school from noise pollution, not confronting classroom windows to street, existence of health educator at the school for training hygienic principles to students, having enough light in classrooms, not pale blackboard, performing medical examinations at school, school officials supervision on hygiene of health services and cleaning school environment.

C. Suitable spaces for playing and entertainment: components related to this factor from perspective of students and teachers include the existence of play equipment such as swing, swings, etc in school, adequate sports equipments, the existence of sports hall, large and broad school yard, allocating the dressing room to sport time, the existence of suitable place for national- religious holidays and celebrations in school, the existence of suitable place for holding different exhibitions or graduation celebrations and the existence of places for conducting sport competitions among students and teachers.

### Spiritual or Stimulating Features

A. exhilarating factors: Components related to this factor from perspective of students and teachers include assistant or other school staff should not be strict, homework should not be too much, no assignment during the test, no penalty for students, not calling for students' parents when failing to do homework, paying attention to the desire and ability of students in determining assignment, giving more natural, various and attractive activity to active students, not determining the same assignment to all students, no extra homework to punish stu-

dents, not teaching in physical education class, not wasting physical education class time, forbidding bullying, changing the surveillant of class, smiling and openness of teacher, not proposing the personal problems of teacher in class, adornment of appearance of teacher, not devoting class time to joke and jest, considering teacher's behavior and character as the pattern, having healthy teachers, hiding students' economic status from teacher, presenting new content word and significant point in each session by teacher, having a exercise class every day, longer duration of recess, keeping students reputation near other students, giving importance to students' effort not score, refusing to threaten students with expulsion from school, refusing to get out students from classroom, refusing to make fun the students, not comparing students with each other, not punishing students, ignoring students' small errors, not making students' small mistake as a big mistake, refusing to make students' submissive, not forcing students to apologize for their offense, taking the prize for all students, considering the students' all abilities, giving the right of choice to students in school activities, playing happy songs and verses from the Quran by speaker during the recess, considering school like home not like an office, decisiveness, seriousness and authority of school personnel in observing the regulations and standards, administrator and assistants' required care and control in weekly planning based on the scientific principles, students' morale and the requirements of each course. Also, the existence of the experienced, expert and fixable staff, resourceful and resilient principal must be the incentive of values and common purpose among students, teachers and parents. Principal and staff of school must be affable, realistic and fair assessment of school officials about the employees' activities, and they should respect for all employees' efforts, pay special attention to creative and innovative teachers, emphasize and rely on school authorities on teachers' teaching quality by work monitoring not by quantity (inspect, grade, etc.). Most of the teachers in the school activities should give authority to teachers in school activities, and avoid discrimination and injustice among teachers. They should provide a safe and friendly environment in schools for the students, and emphasize the value of all lessons, eliminate teachers' fears and concerns and job insecurity. The students should be provided with the high enthusiasm and interested in learning and they should be punctual, dutiful and grateful

B. emotional and social needs and interests of students: components related to this factor from perspective of students and teachers include: paying attention to students' idea in selection of school uniform's color, paying attention to students' idea in beautification of school facade, paying attention to students' idea in selection of classrooms' color, paying attention to students' idea about the type of rhetoric that is written in school, respect to the decisions of different groups of students, paying attention to students' idea in painting of school facade, teacher's listening to students' words, expressing the students' goodness near their parents, being a kind teacher and reading poems and childish stories for children, taking students to the cinema, theater, museums and spectacular location, holding more competitions for students, implementation of chores by students at the school, considering some programs to display movie, theater and musical performances, etc. Also, there are some other factors which should be taken into account such as inviting popular people such athletes, artists and famous religious, scientific, and social people for speech, training the sport and recreation games by teacher, holding the exhibitions such as book fairs and, etc, designing programs to familiarize students' parents with the fundamentals of psychology and education, formation of a collection of works, experiences and interests of students in the area of different courses, providing the area for holding party among students in each class, creating the area for discussing and exchanging idea about the daily problems of society, conducting the morning exercise at school, invite experts and professionals to give quality to teachers' council meetings, getting feedback from the teachers in beautification of school facade, taking teachers to religious and spectacular location, cinema, theater.

C. participation in school management: components related to this factor from perspective of students and teachers include get assistance of students to keep the school clean, get assistance of students to disinfect the health services, get assistance of students in cleaning the tables and chairs and school, get assistance of students in school library management, get assistance of students in creating the green space and tree planting, get assistance of students in school facade painting, give responsibility to students in maintenance of vases, share classroom activities and give responsibility to all students, use the students for reconstruction and repair of the school, using the students' idea in school

affair's planning, use of students to teach the principles of hygiene, use of students for holding various exhibitions, depute school buffet and stores to students, get assistance of students to monitor the health of health services and school chairs, depute implementation of morning and noon programs to students, get help from students calligrapher in writing slogans of school, use students idea in selection of classroom color and painting, assigning the management of some school affairs to students, constitution of hygiene, sports, arts, religious, cultural and social groups for students' participation, use parents' ideas about school planning, inform parents of students with recreational programs and camps, publication of special issue and magazine etc, in school to get teachers' idea in writing paper and ... by them, bring to teacher education, recreational games, revise aspects of the school, depute fun games' training to teachers, revise and modify some aspects of the school, constitution of advisory and educational committees with presence of teachers and parents at the beginning of the school year, participating teachers in constituting the research and analyzing groups at school, paying attention to teachers' idea in school management, emphasis on employees' opinion toward teachers' council formation, get help from teachers in creating the green spaces and tree planting at school and for teaching the principles of health to students, give role to teachers in developing programs related to school affairs, assign part-time of teachers to resolve disciplinary and ethical issues of students, get help from students when necessary, get assistance of students in establishing school discipline, and conducting the morning exercise with management of sport teacher or athlete student and survey from students' parents in predicting the tourism - pilgrimage programs of school.

D. Emphasis on more affection of students to school: components related to this factor from perspective of students and teachers include constituting the football team to contest with football teams of other schools, constituting the various hygienic, scientific, artistic, athletic groups to contest with other schools, preparing special flag for school, use of special flag and sign in school parades, constituting the song and theater groups to compete with other schools, preparing the publications and special issue in school and sending it to other schools, and providing the possibility of proposing critical feedback of students in Special Issue projects and publications of school.

E. Promoting the culture of collaborative learning and teaching: components of this factor from perspective of students and teachers include the existence of required books in school library, the existence of required laboratory device for each lesson, letting students use the laboratory devices, considering scientific trips for the students, engaging students in the teaching process, letting students use educational aids for better learning, arousing thinking until the learning takes place in school, allocating the library bell in the curriculum, providing syllabus and lesson groups in the class, having access to the Internet and World sites and taking advantage of training opportunities for teachers and students, deputing the research work fit to various lessons to student groups, helping students to find answers to questions. The teachers and students should cooperate with each other to achieve success, share classroom activities among students and giving them responsibility. We can also mention some other factors such as the reflection of parents' reform ideas to teachers in relation to their work, effective and ongoing connection of school with the successful and academic institutions, constituting the discussion groups for students, reflecting the students' opinions to teachers, constituting the academic forum for students and constitution of research and analysis group based on systematic thinking, constituting the training groups among teachers with same field and level and equipping schools in terms of software and hardware (laboratories, workshops, maps, globes, models, instructional videos, etc.).

F. Paying attention to the social and welfare status of teachers: components of this factor from perspective of students and teachers include paying attention to welfare of employees in the school as possible, appreciation and thanks for the teachers in material and spiritual form, providing the area for teachers and their families to use the social facilities (half-price tickets at the movie, museums, etc.), school personnel's support from teachers when necessary, giving possibility to teachers and their families to take advantage of recreational and pilgrimages camps and provision thinking to teachers to use the studying opportunities.

### Recommendations of the study

The most important recommendations based on these results can be presented as follows:

- Given that one of the factors related to the

characteristics of a lovely school is school beautification, it is suggested that the educational planners and decision-makers of Lorestan province make the necessary effort to conduct the mentioned component such as painting the schools facade, classrooms, use the spectacular boards and images, etc..

- Another factor, the hygienic condition of schools like keeping clean the school chairs, environment, having enough light, etc. It is necessary that those involved in these issues conduct required planning with regard to hygienic condition of schools.

- Proper spaces for playing and recreation is one of the major issues in schools, cases such as required sports equipment, large yard of the school, dressing room assign to sport bell time, etc. It is essential that the managers at different levels of education try to resolve the existed failure.

- Without strict of assistant or other school staff, without too much homework, teachers must not teach during sport class and recreation that is the components of the exhilarating factors in school. Considering this factor can make the school a lovely environment for students and teachers. Therefore, the educational planners and decision makers must pay attention to this factor.

- Considering the students' opinion in beautification of school facade, selection of uniform's color, implementation of chores by students and issues related to their social and emotional interests and needs. So, the authorities need to think of provisions to provide the social and emotional needs of students.

- One of the features of a lovely school refers to engaging students and teachers in the school management. The necessity of providing an area for contributions of these two elements in various aspects of school administration is inevitable. It is necessary to develop programs in order to pay more attention to these basic issues.

- Preparing special flag for school, composing of the different groups to compete with other schools could lead to greater attachment to the school for students and teachers. So it plans to pay more attention to this issue will develop. It is necessary to develop programs to pay more attention to this factor.

- Other results of present research in relation to the features of a lovely school, it can be pointed to promote collaborative learning and teaching. Educational authorities and planners can provide required circumstance to realize this factor and with

elimination of shortcomings and reinforcement of strengths can help schools in this area.

- Paying attention to welfare of employees and appreciating them by different ways which belong to the component of considering the social and welfare status of teachers. By considering this factor, an effective step can be taken to realize the characteristics of a lovely school. Educational authorities and practitioners try to solve the problems of teachers and improve the social and welfare status.

- In line with findings of this study, it is suggested that this subject to be done in frame of an experimental research.

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