



Research Paper
(Quantified)

The effect of school culture on academic alienation with the mediating role of basic psychological needs among first year high school students in Lorestan province.

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Abstract

The present study was conducted with the aim of analyzing the relationship between school culture and academic alienation with regard to the mediating role of basic psychological needs using the descriptive-correlational method. The statistical population includes all the students of the first year of high school in Lorestan province, which was a total of 23223 people, of which 400 people were selected as a statistical sample using the multi-stage cluster sampling method. The data collection tools were three standard questionnaires, Alessandro and Sade's school culture (1997), LaGuardia et al.'s (2000) basic psychological needs, and Dillon and Groat's (1976) academic alienation. The research data after collection were analyzed using Lisrel and SPSS statistical software.. The results showed that school culture has a direct effect on basic psychological needs (0.67). The t statistic of this effect is also (8.72), which is positive and significant at the 0.001 level. The direct effect of school culture on academic alienation is (-0.27). The t statistic of this effect is also (-3.12), which is negative and significant at the 0.01 level. The direct effect of basic psychological needs is on academic alienation (-0.47). The t-statistic of this effect is also (-4.41), which is negative and significant at the 0.001 level. The indirect effect of school culture on academic alienation is (-0.31). The t statistic of this effect is also (-4.20), which is negative and significant at the 0.001 level. Considering that this effect affects academic alienation through basic psychological needs, as a result, the mediating role of basic psychological needs in the relationship between school culture and students' academic alienation is confirmed.

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Extended abstract

Introduction

One of the most important problems of the contemporary period, which many societies are suffering from and which has occupied the minds of thinkers, is the problem of alienation (Mohseni Tabrizi, 1991). Alienation, which includes feelings of hopelessness and loneliness, dates back to the time when people established relationships with themselves and those around them (Karatepe et al., 2021). A review of the conducted researches shows that there are factors that are the basis of students' academic alienation. According to Hascher & Hagenaver (2011), the motivation is the connecting concept of alienation with other variables. Self-determination theory is one of the most important theories in the field of motivation. This theory is based on the assumption that the living organism has a primary, internal and basic system of psychological needs that become more complex during growth and interaction with the environment, until it becomes more complex systems of behavior (Desi and Ryan, 2000). These needs include autonomy, competence and relatedness (Vansteenkiste & Deci, 2004). The conceptualization of basic psychological needs has been confirmed in research on how teachers influence students' motivation and behavior through the ways in which teachers support or hinder students' autonomy (Sharp & Pelletier, 2009). Also, according to the theory of ecological systems, culture is one of the factors that can influence the behavior in individual environments, such as the behavior of students and teachers in the classroom (Berk, 2011). On the other hand, schools try to transfer the cultural heritage of society from one generation to another and support the socialization of their beneficiaries with organizational culture. The concept of school culture is defined as a set of shared ideas, assumptions, values, and beliefs that give the school its identity and indicate the behaviors expected of school members. School culture can be defined as all the ideals, values, norms, beliefs, traditions and other cultural symbols that help determine the quality of the school (Bozkurt, 2023).

The current research tries to answer and explain the question that "Does school culture have an effect on academic alienation with the mediating role of basic psychological needs among students of the first year of high school in Lorestan province?"

Theoretical framework

School culture

School culture is a complex concept that includes values, beliefs, attitudes and behaviors that shape how people interact and communicate in an educational environment. School culture is common assumptions, beliefs and values that are the basis of people's behavior in a school. A positive school culture is characterized by shared values, high expectations, and a focus on continuous improvement; while a negative school culture is associated with low expectations, pessimism about the future, and lack of trust (Dawkins et al., 2021).

Basic psychological needs

Self-determination theory is a macro-level theory that explains aspects of human motivation, behavior, well-being and psychological adjustment. This theory generally deals with the factors that facilitate or hinder self-actualization in humans. According to self-determination theory, people have an innate desire for growth and integration. The desire to explore the environment, curiosity and pursuing inherently challenging and satisfying activities are manifestations of this desire. The basis of the theory of self-determination is the basic needs, which are considered as the necessary energy to help active involvement with the environment, healthy psychological functioning, development of skills and healthy growth. These needs exist naturally in all humans. This theory postulates that the fulfillment of basic



needs is necessary for effective internalization of behaviors, psychological development, motivation, and well-being (Mirzaei Fandokht et al, 2020).

Academic alienation

Alienation is not a new concept, and education experts, managers and school staff are aware of the existence of alienated students in their schools and classrooms. These students show different behaviors; for example, some of them are sitting in class and just staring at the teacher. They insult the teachers, disrupt the class; and when these behaviors exceed their limits, they leave the school. Some of these students leave school for a while, and others withdraw from school forever. These teenagers are alienated from the system whose main purpose is their education. Therefore, according to these contents, it is necessary that education professionals, families and school staff gain deep knowledge about the concept of alienation and then be able to take measures to reduce it (Amani Sari Baglo et al, 2014).

Trivedi & Prakasha (2021) conducted a study titled "The effect of school culture on students' alienation". The statistical population of the research included students aged 18 to 22 from one of the top universities in India. The results of the research showed that school culture has a negative and significant effect on students' academic alienation.

Schmid et al, (2021) conducted a study titled "Relationship between school's social culture and academic alienation". The statistical population of the research included 7th grade students of the canton of Bern, Switzerland. The results of correlation analysis and multiple regression showed that there is a significant relationship between the positive and relatively strong student-teacher and student-student relationship with the reduction of students' academic alienation.

Research methodology

The research method is descriptive-correlative in nature and applicable in terms of purpose. The statistical population included all the students of the first year of high school in Lorestan province, of which 400 statistical samples were selected using the multi-stage cluster sampling method. Data collection tools were three standard questionnaires: Alessandro and Sade's(1997) school culture, Laguardia et al.'s (2000) basic psychological needs, and Dillon and Groat's (1976) academic alienation.

Research findings

Research data were analyzed after collection using Lisrel and SPSS statistical software. The results showed that the direct effect of school culture and basic psychological needs on students' academic alienation was negative and significant. The effect of school culture on students' psychological needs was positive and significant, and the effect of school culture on students' academic alienation was positive and significant with the mediating role of basic psychological needs.

Conclusion

The present study was conducted with the aim of analyzing the relationship between school culture and basic psychological needs with academic alienation. This finding is consistent with the research results of Buzzai et al, (2022), Eghdami & Yousefi (2018), Mirzaei Fandokht et al, (2020), Akour (2006), Srite et al, (2008), Hascher & Hagen aver (2010), Amani sari-Beglou(2012), Sadeghi et al, (2013), Mahmoudi et al, (2015), Visani et al, (2012), Amani sari-Beglou (2012), Birami et al, (2014), and Galavandi (2012). In explaining these findings, it can be said that the sense of coherence with the school environment and the internalization of its rules and norms are among the factors that increase students' interest in

school and prevent their alienation; because a person feels alienated when he cannot create a strong and stable relationship to his surroundings. Therefore, when the school culture is in an unfavorable situation, such a culture is not able to facilitate the formation of friendly and strong relationships between the members and also help to keep these relationships stable. In such a situation, the feeling of social cohesion among people is weakened and the phenomenon of academic alienation among students appears. The less students experience the fulfillment of their three basic psychological needs, i.e., autonomy, competence, and connection, in the school environment, the more they will feel academic alienation. Students will perceive their alienation as a feeling of helplessness and lack of influence on the environment, a sense of meaninglessness, which means that studying has no special meaning and value for them, and a feeling that they are separated from school members.

According to the findings of the research for the applicability of the results in educational and training environments, the following practical suggestions are provided.

- Teachers in the school environment should try not to differentiate between students and pay attention to all of them and treat all students equally.
- The underlying factors of tension and differences between students are identified by school administrators and counselors, and measures are taken to resolve them through group and individual counseling.
- Administrators should try to provide the facilities in the school equally to the students and not to provide these facilities only to the strong students; because this further isolates the weaker students.