

Original Article (Qualitative)

# Designing a model for the development of questioning skills based on the school context in primary school students

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**Abstract**

The purpose of the current research is to design a model for the development of questioning skills in elementary school students of Razavi Khorasan Province based on the school context. The research method of data-based theory and qualitative approach has been used to answer this question in the qualitative part. 2020 MaxQDA software was used for data analysis. The sampling method is of a targeted type, which reached saturation by conducting a total of 10 interviews with professors and experts in the fields of education management. In the qualitative section, after conducting interviews and coding processes; as many as 217 open codes, including 11 codes for actors, 37 codes for causal conditions, 12 codes for phenomena, 33 codes for context, 45 codes for intervening conditions, 49 codes for strategy, and 30 codes for Consequences were identified in the initial coding, which decreased after being converted into sub-categories and main categories. Nine main categories were identified as effective strategies, including empowering students; empowering parents; empowering teachers; change in the way of teaching and training; appropriate national planning in order to strengthen students' skills (especially questioning); the development of the intellectual and cultural base of schools; empowering and increasing the power of schools in education; foundation for questioning in schools and the growth of the culture of questioning in society. These strategies had 49 open codes. In addition, in this research, the causal; contextual; intervening conditions, actors, and consequences of the model were presented.

**Keywords:**

questioning,  
school environment,  
questioning skill,  
questioning development  
strategies,  
development of  
intellectual base

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## Extended abstract

### Introduction

Students' questions are one of the most important things in class interaction; it will show whether the learning process has a good effect or not. In addition, instructors will find out how well students actually understand the material they show their students in class. A good question has some indicators such as creative action, good structure, and adding knowledge (Firmansyah & Sata, 2021), so if we want to develop reflective learning in children, attention should be paid to their questions and their questioning skills (Hooshmandi et al., 2020). The prerequisite for this issue is the existence of a model as a guide for the action of those in charge; a model in which the background conditions, intervening conditions, causal conditions, and consequences of this issue are correctly identified. Therefore, there should be a comprehensive model for the development of questioning skills in students according to the environment of the school, which originates from the fundamental document of transformation in education. That is, with a comprehensive investigation on the field of development of questioning skills and with a look at the school environment in the province, the causal factors affecting the development of questioning skills, the context and background conditions that cause this development the interfering conditions in the development of questioning skills should be identified; and then, by formulating appropriate strategies in line with the development of questioning skills in the students of Khorasan Razavi province, the research model should be completed, and the consequences of implementing these strategies should be identified, and finally the obstacles in the implementation of this model in the country should be identified. As it is known, this research is required for the current days of the country and the society of Iran, and it is trying to provide a local model that fits the cultural characteristics of the society by comprehensive investigation and using the method of data-based analysis and interviews with experts. Therefore, the basic question of this research is that: what is the model of developing questioning skills in the students of Razavi Khorasan Province based on the school environment?

### Theoretical Framework

**School environment:** it is a program that, by trusting on the competence and ability of the school, assigns the license to curriculum planning; implementation; and evaluation of a certain amount of formal education time to the school in accordance with the prescribed frameworks (Ahmadi & et al., 2017).

**Questioning skill:** Questioning is considered central in helping students develop curiosity and capacity in learning and research. For elementary teachers, designing a science curriculum to embody inquiry in the classroom and encourage student inquiry remains a challenge (Wu & He, 2021). Children begin to think philosophically when they begin to ask the question "why"; therefore, the importance of questioning skills among children will exist. Through their questioning, children will progress beyond the boundaries of their experience, and this will help build relationships that expand these boundaries (Zulkifi & Hashim, 2019). Shiravani Shiri (2023) conducted a research on the role of stories in nurturing and strengthening children's questioning skills. The findings showed that some children's stories, by creating a form and experience of life, expose the child to a set of opportunities and situations, albeit fictitious, but carefully designed.

Cumhur & Guven (2022) conducted a research titled the effect of lesson study on questioning skills: improving students' answers. The findings showed the effectiveness of lesson study in increasing the use of exploratory questions, guidance. and clarification to improve students' answers, and these questions were qualitatively more successful in improving students' answers in lesson study and after lesson study periods.

Çetin (2021) conducted a research titled investigating the relationship between STEM awareness and pre-service teachers' questioning skills. For the dimension of positive opinion of STEM awareness, there were statistically significant differences; and fourth grade students were higher than other students. For the knowledge control dimension of questioning skills, there was a statistically significant difference based on gender. This value was higher for male participants. There was also a positive relationship between STEM awareness dimension and questioning skills dimension.

### Research methodology

Considering the fact that the upcoming research seeks to identify and develop questioning skills in the students of Khorasan Razavi province based on the school environment and provide a model for it, it is fundamental in terms of the purpose, and exploratory in terms of the result; among the researches that has been conducted by the approach quality. The data collection method was in-depth interview. In this research, with the aim of collecting qualitative and real information, a total of 10 expert professors in the fields of educational management and educational sciences were interviewed, who had master's and doctoral degrees in the field of research and work records of more than ten years. Repetitions were found in the received information from interview 9 onward.

### Research findings

Data analysis was done using MAXQDA software. Based on the results and according to the qualitative analysis, a total of 217 open codes were identified in the initial coding, including 11 codes for actors, 37 codes for causal conditions, 12 codes for phenomena, 33 codes for context, 45 codes for intervening conditions, 49 codes for strategy, and 30 codes for the outcome, which were reduced after becoming sub-categories and main categories. Nine main categories were identified as effective strategies, including empowering students; empowering parents; empowering teachers; change in the way of teaching and training; appropriate national planning in order to strengthen students' skills (especially questioning); the development of the intellectual and cultural base of schools; empowering and increasing the power of schools in education; foundation for questioning in schools, and the growth of the culture of questioning in society. These strategies had 49 open codes. Finally, the research model was presented.

### Conclusion

In this research, an attempt was made to design a model for the development of questioning skills in the students of Razavi Khorasan province based on the school environment by using the data-based theory and interviewing experts. After that, the codes that were conceptually similar to each other were grouped. The results of this research were consistent with the results of Firmansyah & Sata (2021); Cumhuri & Guven (2022); and Shiravani Shiri (2023).

According to the obtained results, the following suggestions are provided:

**Suggestion to parents:** It can be said that asking questions can make students (children) feel insecure. Parents and educators should create an environment where asking questions is considered a strength, not a weakness or a sign of ignorance. If children acquire good listening skills, their ears will become sharper to the sounds around them, and this carefulness and attention will have a direct effect on the development of their creativity and initiative.

**Suggestion to teachers:** It is also recommended to teachers to be careful in choosing their teaching method and use question-and-answer-based methods as much as possible. While teaching and working with students, they should always provide a space for creating questions in the student's mind, and avoid giving ready answers to the student. Teachers should always



set opportunities, however short, in the classroom for asking questions. Students should be placed in different group activities to lead to better and more thoughtful questions.

**Suggestion to schools:** It is suggested to schools to try to hold up-to-date and new training courses so that teachers get to know the new methods of developing students' skills and have the ability to apply and implement these trainings. Efforts should also be made to create in-service courses for teachers, and by holding practical courses focusing on the needs of society and the educational needs of students; valuable courses should be designed so that teachers participate in these courses with more enthusiasm and motivation, and improve their ability in the field of training skilled students.

This research had limitations such as the difficult conditions of access to experts, and also the impossibility of face-to-face interviews with experts due to job conditions, and the conditions of the corona disease in the country.