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Teaching-Learning Environment in the Curriculum with Students' Mental Health Promotion Ideology

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ABSTRACT

Teaching - learning environment should be designed considering the psychological needs of students, adherence to the principle of mediation between form and meaning in architecture and in line with the satisfaction of human requirements, emotional security, good sensation and mental well-being and the happiness of future generation. The main objective of this study was to determine the characteristics of the elements and teaching - learning environment in the curriculum based on mental health. The present study is done based on the previous research finding analyses by the synthesis method and with the aim of achieving consolidated knowledge as the teaching-learning environment in the curriculum based on mental health promotion. The research area of all research papers of Iranian researchers has been students and the sampling has been purposeful which has continued until theoretical saturation. Authentic databases (Homogenous sampling) in the period of last 10 years (2005-2016) were used to select 100 Iranian papers related to the promotion of mental health of students. Information analysis through subjective coding with a three-step open, axial, and selective coding indicate that atmosphere and teaching-learning environment of the curriculum should be established in three dimensions of physical dimension (the school greenery, light and natural ventilation, happy coloring, beauty and aesthetics (environment decoration), and creative multiple usage), mental dimension (clean and innocent environment, healthy and exciting atmosphere and positive emotional atmosphere) and social dimension (facilitative and supportive environment and peer interactions atmosphere) for improving the mental health of students.

Keywords: Curriculum, Mental Health, Teaching- Learning Environment, Well-Being.

INTRODUCTION

With his tow-thousand-year experience, the human has fully understood that he requires peace, happiness and mental health. The calculator human has now understood that he is lost in the give and take of industrial development and mental health and failure, failure, distress, chaos, neurosis, anxiety, depression, bewilderment and disdain is his share. Now, the human being, with perceiving these undesired feelings, has found the solution not only in the negation of industrial development or eliminating it but also in the development of psychological abilities for the desired consistency, the betterment of self-confidence, the development of self-efficacy, the growth of positive self-expression, self-esteem and in one word as the development of mental health. In that bewilderment and worry and in this hope and self-esteem, all the criticisms are towards the

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education system of countries. Perhaps, the same path of developed civilization of the technology era provides another miracle of education and promotion of the skills that guides world citizens to better mental health and happiness; a miracle that may rescue the human being of the psychological sufferings and challenges that have redeemed his peace him. The indication of such claim is the strategic motto of 2001 –the entry year of the third millennium- is the World Health Organization that's seeks the end of negligence of mental health and caring it and has placed the schools as the axis of negligence in all the countries.

The school and curriculum on the one hand can be the main canal of education receive and empowerment skills in the field of mental health for students as a big part of the society and on the other hand, it can be the role player of the axis of the functional network of mental health teaching for all the society through the students as the small ambassadors of mental health. There is no doubt that according to the researches, the promotion of the mental health of the new generation through the school curriculum is a self-centered capital for the future generations. They will face unimaginable economic development or industrial growth and if they should be align with this growing trend of conflict, bewilderment, depression, anxiety and psychological distress, the world will change to a prison for the human beings with all its beauty. This means that the future generation needs more abilities for creating, maintaining and promotion of mental health compared to the current generation. The originator presence of psychological basis in the field of education and especially curriculum will increasingly make the conceptual borders of mental health and education nearer. Education is the subject of human being. Now, education means administration and the guidance of promoting tend and the growth of human being in order to be inclined to the unlimited perfection. Such a definition of education is the confirmation of scientific, philosophical, technical, artistic, industrial and service nature of education(Ghassabi, 2018).

Achieving such a valuable objective requires knowledge and awareness of the authorities of education in the field of the psychological characteristics of human being in order to provide him with mental health and not neglect his essential needs unknowingly; an event that not only does not place him in the way of development and flourish but also faces him with serious mental damages. Accordingly, the unkindness of the curriculum regarding the issue of the health promotion means the sinful withdrawal to the human development growth and helping him to promote him to the mount of perfection considered by Mazlo (Marjoribanks, 2017; Shabani, 2005).

In the view point of some reconceptual idealists, school and curriculum should provide an environment that the children perceive their internal sound and listen to it. Such ability is the introduction of learning how to live(Smith, Singer, Hoel, & Cooper, 2003).

Reconceptualists obviously speak of self-awareness and internal feeling or the third force in education that are the concepts of humanistic psychology and the thoughts of Existentialism and support the curriculum so that in which language, communicational skills, autobiography, literature, psychology and other aesthetic and humanistic issues are emphasized. This program enlightens autonomy, personal suitability, healthy and perfect psychological character, trust, love, self-regulation, sensitivity, joy, soul and the communication needs and school(Ornstein & Hunkins, 1988).

Despite that, it seems that as W. F. Pinar (1981), truly mentions, curriculum brings educational degree for students but takes their mental health away, it gives them the title of a scientist but it distorts their human identity.

The view point of Apple, the famous and political author, mostly confirms the Pinar's worry in this regard. He also believes that schools have alienated students from themselves and have resulted in the sense of personal meaning. Apple knows the final aim of curriculum as helping to build a more humane society, rebuilding human relationships and social strengthening and modernizing through facing students with social environment context with a thoughtful question that where does the curriculum go and emphasize the fact that curriculum should search its roots in a social and economic justice theory. Apple knows the dry and inflexible environment and strict statements of school and technical structure of curriculum as demanding and causing mental damages to students(Apple, 2004).

The strategy to achieve mental feeding at school is establishing a Center of Care for students. Students should play the role of responsible, facilitator and instructor in the education process and not as the expert of moral issues. Teachers should provide a situation to present what they and their students think. In this way, the teacher should continuously be creating new learning because staying behind the increasing and new learning of students and fixing and emphasizing on previous acquirements is an obstacle on the way of the learning of students(W. Pinar, 2014).

Students should perceive the sympathy of their teacher in the teaching-learning process. So, the increase of emotional and kind relationships has been emphasized in education and is the introduction to the expansion of care in the classroom. This care includes components such as attention, interest, importance and love. The motherly and lovely relationship cannot be neglected in education. In the classroom, in the give and takes of student and teacher, student and student and teacher and teacher should place sympathy in the center of human relationships(Heid & Kelehear, 2007; Noddings, 2015).

It seems that curriculum with sympathy and caring spirit needs collapsing traditional structures of school and this breaking is the breaking the silence that leads students to devotion and unreasonable adherence, annoys their souls and make them sad in the view point of Diagnault. The traditional schools are the scenarist of silence and mess which is not acceptable(W. Pinar, 2014).

Such points are regularly seen amidst the curriculum reconceptualists' ideas that emphasize on the mental health of students obviously or figurative. In this regard, Noddings (2015), also pints out to the expansion of psychological attention in the curriculum by writing books such as "Happiness and Education". In his view, the school structure should be the promoter of friendship and intimacy between individuals in order for the daily emotions and excitements possibility of expression to be provided. Only in such an atmosphere, a heartfelt communication is formed between students. The students' relationship is important in real classroom environment and school is where in which students are mentally fed.

Trying to communicate between the curriculum and mental health is the necessity that many countries have found it. Importance and necessity of such an effort can be summarized as:

- Attracting the attention of teachers to the field of mental health promotion of students,

- The impact of mental health on students' learning,

- The knowledge increase in the field of mental problems and disorders of students and its prevention strategies,

- The worry of the threatening increased mental health statistics, including the expulsion of children with unhealthy behavior in school; mental disorders among the student population, student suicides, irregular growth of substance abuse and depression of school age children,

- The threatening effect of lack of mental health in all aspects of students' lives, including the emotional, social and physical growth

- The negative impact of lack of mental health on academic achievement and good situation for creating educational failure,

- The negative consequences of psychological problems and challenges of students on the people around them, including teachers and other students,

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- opportunity loss and the impact of mental health problems of adolescents on the other sectors of society as to spend more financial resources in the field of social, educational and judicial services(Atkinson & Hornby, 2015).

Now in the third millennium, education institution should acquire the required knowledge in order to be aware of the psychological needs the realization of which is the prerequisite of learners' mental health and design curriculum based on that. It is only in this case that curriculum can respond to the needs of growing learners and this will give meaning to the flourish of students(Weist, Evans, & Lever, 2008).

The countries' curriculum review is aimed to provide and promote the mental health of the future generation of the country and is the necessity of the happiness and the development of that society. Mental health is the most important guarantee for the construction, growth, self-confidence, efficiency and competence of the human resource of a society to realize the comprehensive scientific, economic, political, social and cultural development(Amatea & Clark, 2005).

International studies are also as an emphasis on the importance and necessity of the design of a space and appropriate teaching-learning environment with mental health of students and is an emphasis on the attention to curriculum in the field of well fare and flourishing as a main objective in the field of education(Seligman, 2012).

The World Health organization did a research on updating the health information of students, parents and school staff in 2001 which led to planning a curriculum which is the propagator of health and its announcement to the member countries as a global movement. The necessity of health education including mental education was the pivotal core of the mentioned study. The evaluation of risky behaviors of health in regard to mental health, dangerous sexual relationships, drug abuse and alcohol, aggression and teaching life skills in order to face the problems in a healthy way were paid attention to by the research.

In a study conducted by the Department for Education in England (2011) during three years in 350 schools throughout England, the key aspects regarding the mental health at school were defined based on the view point of 20000 students participating in the research: a safe and sound environment for dialogue, the availability of the school staff and peers' support, the support of the students who seek the elimination of aggression and the betterment of their behavior and the support of the school-home relationship. Students have also defined aspects such as friendship, emotional status, not having problem at school and having non-problematic presence at school as an important part of the school that is related to mental health. The key aspects of psychological well fare was competence and friends in the view point of students or the lack of problem or real happiness or depression and their priorities for more development of mental health programs at school was the betterment of the physical environment of school, the preparation of public rooms and stress and providing equipment and presenting more expert information such as drugs.

In an study to evaluate the consequences and methodology of the mental health objective project in west Midlands schools in England, Cane and Oland (2015), have reported their results as well as the confirmation of the effectiveness of the totality of the program as: the increase of understanding and empathy, the increase of self-confidence in regard to the mental health counseling, the increase in the self-awareness for the executive school staff and positive behavioral consequences in students such as the increase in the flexibility, the increase in the self-confidence, self-expression, more positive and constructive relationships with peers, the betterment of empowerment and independence and the positive change in the social and emotional atmosphere of the institution.

The research of the Joint Consortium for school health (2009) was done through the semistructured interviews with psychologists, counselors and school principals throughout Canada that have the direct experience in the field of development and implementation methods of positive mental health at schools and it is reported in 2015 reports that there are findings in regard to the healthy school policy, teaching and learning, healthy social and physical environment and positive appropriate mental health in accordance to the positive mental health relationship with the betterment of the growth and development of students in school. Key concepts and the extracted positive aspects include: mental health and well fare, positive social and emotional development, client-centered strength, the increase of self-efficacy, the awareness of the capacity and personal strength points, personal resilience, self-actualization and self-determination.

Brophy and McCaslin (1992), pay attention to curriculum planning in their study with counting behavioral difficulties of students for the damages that each of these difficulties poses on the mental health of learners. Their suggesting strategies are for the maintain and promotion of the mental health of students, true management of school, the appropriate administration of class and changing the environment because changing environment is much easier than changing students' character.

The attachment and tie of the education and curriculum engineering are in line with human worries such as the promotion of mental health which is not only a necessity based on the mentioned reasons but also is followed by auspicious consequences such as the fertility of the curriculum, making the learning interesting for the learners in the way of high quality living (healthy life), sublime ability, the reach of more students to flourish borders and their successful and happy presence in the field of citizenship independence and growth. The study has considered the teaching-learning environment and atmosphere of curriculum based on the mental health promotion with such a hopeful view and is rooted back in the issues of mental health and health psychological findings and the point of view of the active experts in the field of mental health of students. This is why the issue that is main point of the research is that the element of teaching-learning environment and atmosphere is as one of the characteristic elements of curriculum based on the mental health promotion for the primary schools in Iran.

METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted confirming the findings of earlier research. Synthesis research is a form of research the result of which is achieving consolidated knowledge. In other words, this study provides knowledge that put the scattered studies and research related to the specific needs of action together in order to acquire new knowledge to help solving current and other problems that require planning or making practical decisions(Marsh, 1991). However, no single list of steps in the field of synthesis research based on the relevant authorities could be presented; Hurd (1983), has introduced it with seven interactive steps, and Ward and Reed (1983), has defined the research in six main steps and Roberts (1983), has introduced it in six stages. According to the aforementioned steps, in this study a combination of the two Hurd and Roberts' methods were used, in other words, the following steps are carried out by the researcher: identifying the need or demand (confirming necessity and importance of research); identify sources of first-hand information (receiving 100 scientific papers of Iranian researchers as first-hand sources of research in the field of mental health of students via validated databases in the interval 2006-2016); identifying information or conceptual categories based on patterns from previous analyses (identification of information based on set targets among the midst of the gathered information); sorting of knowledge in the appropriate category for the intended applications (the result of this step is the extraction of 215 concept codes from the heart of the findings of previous research), and

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integration of data within each engineering category (the result of this step was the categorization of concepts); the interpretation of the combined content and presentation of findings.

2.1. Sampling procedures:

Homogeneous sampling was used for the selection of the Iranian articles related to mental health of students through purposeful sampling.

2.1.1 Sample Size:

In qualitative research, the sample size has a direct relationship with the researcher's judgment and according to Patton, this requires a trade-off between breadth and depth of the research (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996; Pekrun & Linnenbrink-Garcia, 2014); hence, sampling was done gradually about the study and analysis of articles related to students' mental health promotion and it was continued to the point of saturation. Methods for data collection:

Data collection for this study was the library method. Therefore, note taking was used for the data collection from books, papers, documents and texts related to mental health.

In this study, one of the alternative criteria introduced by Lincoln and Guba was used to study and evaluate the research quality from the credibility criterion. In this regard, the credibility is provided emphasizing the use of people outside the research area. On the other hand, the used strategies by the researcher that are in consistency with the experts' point of views and eight strategies for the reliability of qualitative researches are as follows:

- Using more articles after the theoretical saturation and repetition in order to confirm and reinforce previous findings and register to control the validity of the findings.

- The long-term (2 years) presence in field of the study of resources, texts, books and research papers for school mental health field and long-term conflict with atmosphere and creating a clear understanding of its culture.

- Dialogue and debate and exchange meetings with university professors in order to detect items hidden views in various stages of research and presenting research findings in various stages of the occurrence are and modifying misunderstandings along with conflict progress with research space.

- Using external reviewers and surveys of psychologists, counselors and psychotherapists who have student clients and the confirmation of the findings, interpretations and conclusions supported by the data.

In line with the reliability, the researcher has benefited one of the alternative criteria as audit in this study to increase the reliability; these criteria was used to control the quality of note taking of texts and articles, deduction, and structure category the controls were performed in the following cases:

- Control of the raw data collection and record them, ensuring of the data production bases,

- Precise control of the summary, data reduction, control descriptions and short notes and extracting basic concepts and placement in the original table,

- Reconstruction control and the classification of extracted codes in the form of categorized codes and pasting into original table,

- Controlling the naming of the above groups and the synthesis of main categories and monitoring the integration of the concepts and ensuring the link between the mentioned issues with mental health literature,

- Control and ensure of the findings' rely on data and the sampling of the reviewed texts,

- Control of bias monitoring with re-monitoring of the extracted codes of the texts.

Information analysis method in the qualitative section of the research:

Sequential model of Mayring (2007), and deductive composition system were used to analyze the information in the qualitative section. The study has benefited subjective coding in

order to analyze the information which is known as three stages of open, pivotal and selective coding.

RESULTS

100 papers related to the research question as the characteristics of the teaching-learning environment and atmosphere based on the mental health promotion were studied and the main results were identified in the form of 187 extracted code-concepts using health area codes. In the following, these concepts are categorized in the form of 10 characteristics in three general areas (table 1). In better words, the results of this study in relation to teaching-learning environment and atmosphere of curriculum based on mental health promotion shows three general categories of environment and atmosphere in social, physical and mental dimensions. However, with a general view, the entanglement of the mentioned dimensions can be easily understood.

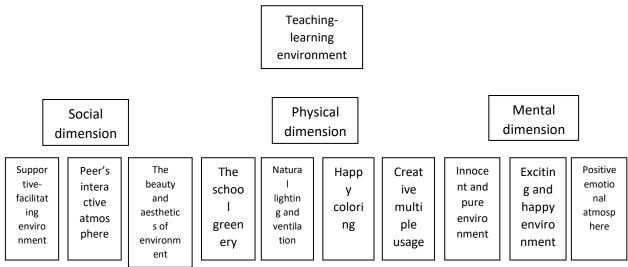


Figure 1. Teaching-learning environment and atmosphere of curriculum based on mental health promotion

1: social climate and teaching-learning atmosphere:

Social climate in mental health promotion -based curriculum include categories such as facilitating and supportive environment and peers' interactive atmosphere.

2: physical dimension of atmosphere and the teaching-learning environment: Based on the obtained results, physical dimensions of the atmosphere and teaching-learning environment of mental health promotion -based curriculum include categories such as school greenery, natural lighting and ventilation, happy coloring, beauty and aesthetics of the environment (environment decoration) and creative multiple usage.

3: psychological atmosphere and teaching-learning environment:

Psychological dimensions of atmosphere and teaching-learning environment of curriculum based on mental health promotion and according to the results of the present study include categories such as pure and innocent environment, exciting and healthy atmosphere and positive emotional atmosphere. Aspects of psychological dimensions is overlapped by school social climate and its separation is not impossible so that that the two complement each other. However, curriculum design based on the promotion of mental health would be demoralized and infertile regardless of the above issues.

CONCLUSION

The research, which is based on the synthesis method and relying on 100 articles of Iranian researchers in the field of mental health of students, was started with a main question as what characteristics does teaching-learning environment of curriculum based on mental health promotion include?

The results showed that a curriculum should be designed based on teaching-learning environment in three general social, physical and psychological categories. There is no doubt that program that claims to promote mental health cannot neglect creating an environment with supportive and facilitating environment, peers' interactive atmosphere, school greenery, natural lighting and ventilation, happy coloring, beauty and aesthetics of the environment (environment decoration), creative multiple usage, pure and innocent environment, exciting and healthy atmosphere and positive emotional atmosphere.

From the perspective of the World Health Organization (2012), mental health training will be only effective in a healthy facilitator's social environment with supportive approach. Social supportive atmosphere causes strengthening the sense of belonging and value in students and prevents them from isolation, loneliness and stress.

Perceiving this supportive and facilitating environment from the side of learners through the disclosure of which the hidden layers of curriculum is provided by trainers and programmers and leads to the expansion of the social relations with others and group supporting and support-seeking at school. This means the meaningful presence and occurrence of the social component of happiness that guarantee the students' mental health besides emotional and cognitive components. In other words, the curriculum promulgating mental health needs a secure, encouraging and facilitating atmosphere in order to lead the learners to the borders of a high quality life with personal independence.

Curriculum based on mental health promotion attracts attention to learners' optimism and the development of their friendly interactions by the construction of a humanist organization that evokes the peer interaction. In such an atmosphere full of interaction and cooperation, the desired characteristics of experts can be observed regarding the healthy school environment; the creation and deployment of interactive space(Carvalho, 2012), development of social interests along with cooperation and partnership and confidence Competition(Schultz & Schultz, 2016), positive relations with others(Seligman, 2012) and healthy competition(Suldo, Gormley, DuPaul, & Anderson-Butcher, 2014) are also included.

According to the World Health Organization emphasis and confirmation (2015), well-fare is intertwined on physical, mental and social health structures and each of these dimensions can affect other aspects; so, the categories of school greenery and natural lighting and ventilation which observe physical health at first glance can be explained in the curriculum based on mental health promotion. Studies have shown the impact of the physical environment, sanitation, ventilation and pollution; having proper and natural light, no sound pollution, appropriate biophysical characteristics on mental health.

Other similar studies have emphasized the positive effect of happy coloring, beauty and aesthetics (environment decoration) and creative multiple usage on mental health. Advices such as the necessity of school design so to increase the opportunity of experiencing and access to resources provides the stimulation and arousal of the brain, provides the desirable decoration and creates the opportunity of contemplation and manipulation through the diversity of chairs decoration(Reeve, 2006). There is no doubt that the usage of such advices needs the school to have happy coloring and open and vase architecture that guarantees and provides the creative multiple usage as well as the considerations of environment decoration that facilitates the experience.

Designing open spaces with pleasant views that gives the possibility of diversity of decoration and usage and happy colors providing friendly and childish architecture should not only be considered by the considerations of mental health but also by the aesthetics of school architecture in the third millennium by the curriculum designers. Happy coloring, beauty and aesthetics (environment decoration) and creative multiple usages are defined as the physical dimension of the teaching-learning environment of the mental health promotion curriculum that their combination provides integrity and synergy of the form and meaning in the school architecture.

The improvement of tolerance and conflict resolution of peers and the growth of self-esteem can lead to the reduction of frustration and aggression in students(Aston, 2014). Therefore, founding an institution with this feature for curriculum designed based on the promotion of mental health plays an undeniable role. Such an idea is in line with the stance of the Canadian Consortium of Mental Health (2015), which knows the flourishing of mental health as requiring a safe fair environment in line with positive communication links.

Healthy and bracing atmosphere is possible through considerations such as giving a feeling of happiness and joy; rule of psychological atmosphere of kindness and friendship(Schultz & Schultz, 2016), the creation and deployment of amplifying environment of controlled and favorable emotions(Zuckerman, 2014); institutionalizing positive attention unrelated to students' behaviors and satisfying the cognitive, meta-cognitive and psychological requirements of students and can accelerate the achievement of the goals of curriculum based on mental health promotion.

Creating a positive emotional atmosphere is a component that covers a part of psychological dimensions of teaching-learning atmosphere, sense of security, free from fear and anxiety and away from the stress situation which is the infrastructure for mental health. With the absence of an emotional secure environment, not only a lasting learning happens, but also the caused psychological damages will lead to the destruction of students' life quality.

Creating a pure and innocent environment in school is important because World Health Organization (2015) emphasizes a healthy and innocent environment for life and peace at school according to the Agreement of Ottawa. The healthy and positive institution in which there is no sin and crime causes the empowerment of students in taking care of themselves and others , healthy decision-making, preventing aggression and making the capacity for peace in the teaching-learning process. The health and positive orientation of the school means the trust in the ability of students in the field of healthy choices in life and its confirmation, creating an environment full of verbal and emotional give and takes and warm and non-conditional acceptance of learners despite the cultural, talent, races and identities differences and diversities. In such an institution, the background for learning and occurrence and lasting of the healthy behaviors is provided, crime and criminology is paled and the development and flourishing changes from slogan to beliefcentered feeling in all cognitive, meta-cognitive, emotional and mental dimensions of students.

Relaxed, safe, positive and stress-free classroom atmosphere extends teaching-learning opportunities and causes the improvement of student learning. In this atmosphere, learning is fun and the sense of well-being is understandable.

The joy in students and the school has always been known as two key elements of Healthy School. The structure of the school that should promulgate friendship and intimacy between people and that the relationship between happiness and education should be included in the curriculum is not neglected by reconceptualists as Noddings (2015). Establishment of centers of care and compassion to students is a requirement for the emotional nutrition of students at school and coaching and facilitation replace the expertise role of teacher in the field of ethical matters

and this is how healthy and exciting spirit and positive emotion associated with trustful approach is blown to the dying statue of curriculum.

It can be stated in the final classification that creating a healthy environment should be psychologically considered to promote students' mental health in addition to education and skills that should be taught to students and focused on in the teaching-learning process. In the World Health Organization view (2015), health education are also incorporated in the way of developing literacy skills and health, psychological and environmental concerns about the social environment and atmosphere of school in the communicated program of the health promoting schools. Teaching-learning environment with mentioned features has been so regarded by Reconceptualists as a part of the curriculum based on mental health promotion in the academic schedule.

Teaching- learning atmosphere in the curriculum considered by re-conceptualists is in such a way that it can give autonomy, personal fitness, full and healthy psychological personality, confidence, love, self-regulation, fun and communication needs to children.

Mental health and prosperity is the right of the future generations and curricula should recognize such a right. Accordingly, it can be argued that this the time for space and environment design of teaching - learning atmosphere based on the aforementioned characteristics. Maybe this way we can offer freshness and vitality and growth to future generation that will be more stressful, more volatile and more unkind than today. The indications of this futurism is obvious from the expansion of aggression, violation, wars, terrorism and pugnacity in the decade of the third millennium and therefore, the future generation requires literacy and learning healthy psychological skills in a healthier environment in order to redeem the human kind. According to the present research results, it is suggested to regulate and design the mental context of the school with the axis of cheer, friendly and acceptable mental environment and adherence to the principle of mediation between the form and meaning in architecture in meeting humane needs, emotional security, proper excitation and illegal attention. Perhaps, the use of the present study results can present a perspective for the teaching-learning environment in the today's curriculum for a beautiful, succulent, relax and lovely future, an environment that will be more friendly and childish for children.

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