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## Perception of class and sense of school belonging and self-regulated learning: A causal model

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### Abstract

The aim of this research is studying the relationships between Perception of class and sense of school belonging with self-regulated learning based on a causal model. For this goal, we selected a sample of two grade students from Tehran city High School. Size Sample was selected 800 (400 boys and 400 girls) which, were based on multistage cluster sampling. Motivated Strategies for Learning questionnaires Pintrich and De Groot (MSLQ) and Perceptions of class Jentry and his colleague (MCA) and psychological Sense of Membership Scale Goodnowe and Grady (PSSM) were administrated to students as a group. Questionnaires validity and reliability were verified. Result of Pearson correlation showed that mutual correlation between components of class environmental perceptions (interest, challenge, choice and enjoy), sense of school belonging (belong, accept and respect) and self-regulated learning (learning believe control, self-efficacy, meta-cognitive self-regulating and helpless) were significant ( $p < 0.01$ ). Results of structural equating modeling (SEM) showed that purposed model was acceptable and fit index was not significant (GFI= 0.95 and RSMEA= 0.07). Also all paths or structural coefficients of purposed model were significant ( $p < 0.01$ ). Therefore self-regulated learning of students was predicted by class environmental perceptions and sense of school belonging. Also In investigated gender difference with ANOVA method showed that, there is no significant difference between girls and boys of class perceived ( $P > 0.05$ ). But the two genders were different of acceptance and belonging scales ( $P < 0.001$ ). Boys scored higher on belonging, but lower on acceptance scale. Also boys outperformed girls in all self-regulation learning components ( $P < 0.001$ ).

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### 1. Introduction

The main purpose of education and training system is to develop self regulated and independent learners who are able to regulate their own learning process. that's why educational psychologists known self regulated learning as a one of the most important variables of learning pintrich (1999), consider self regulated learning as the strategies that are applying by learners to regulate their perception and control their learning .

These strategies include: motivational, cognitive, meta- cognitive strategies and resources management. Many factors, including environmental and social motivations are effective on self regulated learning. One of the most important social motivations in learners is need of connectedness and belonging to the learning environment.

Goodnowe (1993) and Mckey(2007) believe that belonging to school includes components of student's perception of acceptance ,efficacy, attention, respect, supportiveness, participation and being loved by member of

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schools admits. Belonging to school predisposes individual decisions about setting up cognition, emotional and social relationship with learning environment and it provides the groundwork of participation and self regulation in educational and cultural activities in schools. (Goodnowe, 1993; Halt et.al, 2008).

The most important environmental factor that can cause the sense of belonging to school and self regulated learning is classroom environment. But the role of individual perceptions from this environment is more important. Classroom environmental perceptions represent the type of students perceptions from their duties and learning activities in the classroom and include favorite perception, selectivity, challenging, joyfulness of duties and classroom activities.(Jentry et al, 2002). Studies show that if favorite perception, joyfulness, challenge and choices in learning duties are created in learners, they would feel more sense of belonging to their educational environment and they would try more to regulate their learning activities and subsequently will achieve more educational success (Pintrich & De groot, 1990; Ames, 1992; Jentry et al, 2002; Greene et al, 2004; Young, 2005; Larocque, 2008; Sungur & Gungoren , 2009; Hejazi & Naghsh, 2008; Kareshki, 2008). so in this article the result of conceptual model test that include exogenous variable of class environmental perception and sense of belonging to school endogenous variable is used in explanation of self regulation learning.

## 2. Method

### 2.1 Participants

Target population included second grade male and female high school students from field's mathematics, sciences, and the humanities in Tehran. 808 students selected through multi-stage cluster sampling method (408 boys and 400 girls) that, Sample size was determined according to the number of observed variables.

### 2.2 Instruments

In this study three questionnaires of My Class Activity Scale (MCA), Psychological Sense of School Membership Scale (PSSM), and Motivated Strategy for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ) were used.

#### 2.2.1. My Class Activity Scale (MCA)

Student's perception of class environment was assessed My Class Activity Scale (Jentry & et.al, 2002). It is a 31-item questionnaire. Participants determined the extent to which they agreed or disagreed to each question on a 5-point Likert scale. Exploratory factor analysis and confirmatory factor analysis showed that this questionnaire consists of four factors that explained total variance was 49.29. Cronbach's alphas for the scales (interest with 8 questions, 0.86; challenge with 8 questions, 0.68; choice with 8 questions, 0.80; enjoyment with 4 questions, 0.83 and 0.82 for the total scale) are at an acceptable level showing good internal consistency of the scale.

#### 2.2.2. Psychological Sense of School Membership Scale (PSSM)

School belonging is measured through Psychological Sense of School Membership Scale (PSSM) (Goodenow, 1993). This is an 18-question scale which is well suited to adolescents. Participants show their belief toward their school on a 5-point Likert scale. Items 12, 17, 18 were removed after factor analysis due to weak or negative relations to the total factor. All remaining 15 questions were subjected in an exploratory factor analysis. Existence of three factors was confirmed by both exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis. These factors are: belonging (6 questions), acceptance (6 questions), and respect (3 questions), which explained 55 percent of the variance. These results are in line with Goodenow (1993). Alpha coefficients for subscales of belonging (0.71), acceptance (0.73), respect (0.82), and the whole scale (0.75) are acceptable.

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