



Factors Affecting the Sense of Belonging to Dormitories

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Abstract: *Dormitory complexes are among the spaces that young and talented students can grow in, and therefore, it is of paramount importance to pay attention to the factors that improve the sense of self-belonging in the student and make them feel right at home. In this descriptive-analytic study, the information needed to achieve the research purpose were extracted from library archives and case studies, and 230 questionnaires were given to students in the field of arts, for which SPSS software was used to analyze the data. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated to be 0.880 after adjustment, indicating the high reliability of the questionnaire. Moreover, Pearson, T-single, and Friedman tests were used to test the hypotheses. The results showed that from the students' viewpoint, the effect of physical factors on the design of the dormitory was pronounced higher than the average. Moreover, the effect of quality of life on the sense of belonging to the place was higher than the average and the factors of quality of life, cultural factors, physical factors, and health factors affecting the sense of belonging to the location of students were all pronounced higher than average.*

Keywords: *Sense of belonging, Quality of life, Physical factors*

INTRODUCTION

The concepts of privacy, the scope of interaction with the environment, the sense of belonging to a certain place and the personal space are among the most important and definitive factors in student dormitories, for which the psychology of the environment has provided definitions and explanations, as well as reliable context for designers to create an environment that is consistent with the demands of the users of the exploiters (Tahmasebi, 2012).

Moreover, as for the mental aspect, separation from one's family and moving to new residence is the first epidemic problem that all dormitory students encounter when they first enter university. This issue and its complications such as grief, confusion, severe loneliness and get exhausted of studying (the main factor of all these discomforts) are encountered by both students with good and bad familial relationships in the very first days and weeks of their dormitory lives (Mosa Pour, 2011).

Consequently, failure to provide an environment that can meet the student's academic needs is a source of disinclination to be studied in students, which is why it is possible to improve the social and private life students by designing the spatial features of the dormitory in a way that the students consider it as their second home and thus gain a better sense of belonging towards it. One

of the important notions in improving the quality of human environments is the sense of belonging to the place. This feeling, which is an important factor in the formation of communication bases of users and the environment, has a direct hand in the creation of high-quality environments. Belonging to the place is a higher level of sense of place, which plays a determining role in order to benefit and sustain human presence in a place.

With its particular spatial-social shift, the relocation of young students from their houses to dorms depicts a clear example of the manifestation of belonging to the place. The transition to a new cultural and social environment away from home should be deeply taken into consideration as this disturbance in the form of students' environmental attachments, shapes their experiences in a new place, ultimately leading to their personal development. Yet, this type of voluntary relocation may represent an adaptive strategy to promote some aspects of individual identity or a factor contributing to strengthening individual self-esteem from the family, as it provides them with new opportunities for further personal growth (Matin Shahabi, 2015). However, this kind of voluntary relocation may represent an adaptive strategy to promote some aspects of individual identity or a factor contributing to strengthening the individual's independence from the family, as it provides them with new opportunities for personal growth (Hill, 2007). Nonetheless, studies have revealed that the life environment and its consequent alterations are among the determining and contributing factors of the emotional states of individuals (Beals, 2010). This issue, in turn, would have either a direct or an indirect effect on students' academic and behavioral performance.

Therefore, the main and specific concern of this study was the need to pay attention to psychological criteria and two-way human-environment interactions in student dormitories, as it is expected that the result of not paying attention to these factors is the non-fulfillment of needs and thus lacking a sense of belonging to the residential environment, which itself leads to inappropriate use of the environment and lack of sense of responsibility towards it. The negative interaction chain of user's behavior and built environment, on the one hand, leads to gradual and permanent degradation of the quality of life environment and, on the other hand, reduces students' satisfaction from the environment and provokes destructive behavior (Rajabi Branfa, 2013). Accordingly, the purpose of this research was to identify the factors affecting the sense of belonging to the location of the students.

Theoretical Foundations of Research

Sense of Place

The sense of place is more affiliated with affection, sympathy, judgment, and overall experience of a place or its ability to create a sense of being special or belonging to individuals. From the point of view of environmental psychology, humans need to experience a sensory, emotional and spiritual experience in relation to their surroundings. These needs can be realized through intimate engagement and empathy with the place in which one resides (Ghader-Marzi, 2007).

The environment, whether home or public space, in addition to contextual elements, contains messages, implications and mysteries that people may decode according to roles, motivations, and other factors. This general sense, which comes from the perception of judgment of a particular environment, is called the sense of place. As an important factor in coordinating with the environment, better sense of place results in a better environment, the satisfaction of the exploiters, and also improves their sense of belonging to the environment and its continuity (Sarmast and Motevaseli, 2010).

In today's interpretations, the sense of place is what individuals shape in a particular time interval, which is the result of repetitive traditions and events that describes the atmosphere of the

environment. Some places have such an emotion of attractiveness that they induce a person to feel unpardonable and make him happy, lively and interested in returning to that environment. In fact, it can be said that the sense of place reinforces or increases the motivation of survival in a particular environment (Ghader-Marzi, 2007).

Shamai considered three levels for the sense of place, namely belonging to a place, attachment to a place, and commitment to the place. He has divided the sense of the place into seven different levels: a) indifference to the place; b) awareness of being in a place; c) belonging to the place; d) attaching to the place; e) being integrated with the objectives of the place; f) presence in the place; g) sacrificing for the place.

A sense of place has a hierarchy of indifference to sacrificing relative to the place. As environmental features are closer to the characteristics of a metropolitan area, the sense is increased, and besides, people are indifferent to the environment, which has adverse consequences, including physical and mental problems for citizens, and the destruction of the urban environment (Sarmast and Motevaseli, 2010).

Sense of belonging:

The sense of belonging to a particular place is the heightened form of sense of place, which plays a determining role in any position and space for the sustainable presence of human in a place (Falihat, 2010). From the perspective of phenomenologists, sense of belonging means a strong link between people, their place and their constituent parts, as over time, they deepen and develop. Environmental psychologists have also addressed this issue; in this perspective, belonging to a place refers to the relation of the individual to the environment or a space, and in terms of identity, it refers to the relationship of the individual with the place in which he lives (Hidalgo and Hernandez, 2001).

As previously stated, sense of belonging to a particular place is the heightened form of sense of place, which plays a determining role in any position and space for the sustainable presence of human in a place (Falihat, 2010). Having a sense of belonging to a particular place is beyond the awareness of being accommodated in one place (Hidalgo and Hernandez, 2001). This sense leads to a person's transference with a place in which he considers himself a part of the place and, based on his experiences of the signs, meanings, functions, and personality of the place, has a role to play in his mind and the place for him is respected (Steele, 1981).

Therefore, sense of belonging is a complex combination of meanings, symbols and environmental qualities that a person or group perceives consciously or unconsciously based on the connection of a particular place (Forozandeh and Motabi, 2011).

Different approaches to the sense of belonging to the place:

1. The phenomenology of a sense of belonging:

Sense of belonging to a place is a complex concept of human emotions and attachment to the environment that arises from the adaptation and exploitation of man from the place. According to Christine Norberg Schulz, sense of belonging to a place is sought after places that are distinct in characteristics and the peripheral personality is constituted of tangible things that have material, shape, texture and color (Christian, 1997).

From the point of view of human-geography phenomenologists, sense of belonging refers to a strong link between the people and the place and its constituent parts, which is itself a positive relationship that increases the interaction of the individual with the environment, and deepens through time. From the point of view of Rolph, the concept of sense of place is a dynamic issue that, on the one hand, promotes the harmony and proper functioning of the space of architecture and mankind, and on the other hand, it is a factor for the sense of security, pleasure and emotional perception of individuals, which affects the identity of individuals and their sense of belonging to the place. From

the perspective of phenomenologists, the most important concepts related to expressing the sense of place, the place of friendship, the experience of the place and personality of the place, and the sense of place means the immaterial characteristics or place character, which has a meaning close to the soul of the place (Christian, 1997).

Schultz considered the sense of a place to be a general phenomenon with structural values that can be found in the space of perception and navigation in space. In defining the nature of the place, he described it as a totality of objects, physical elements, and what actually constitutes the nature or spirit of the place, and defined the structure of the place consisting of a landscape, a place of residence, space, and personality (Heidegger, 1991).

2. Empiricist approach to the sense of belonging:

In studying the dimensions and nature of the sense of belonging in the empirical approach, attention to human needs is of essential significance. For designing buildings, architects attempt to solve human needs according to the definitions of architecture, as their ultimate purpose is to create environments that meet human needs; on the other hand, behaviors are introduced to satisfy needs, and thus the recognition of human needs for environmental designers is of paramount importance (Heidari, Motabi and Negin Taji, 2014).

The quality of the environment is the outcome of these three components, each of which is responsible for fulfilling one of the environmental qualities. One needs a sensory, emotional and spiritual experience to the environment. These experiences can be realized through intimate engagement and a kind of conceptualization with the place in which it resides (Canter, 1997).

Bentley et al. referred to the existence of a tendency for color and environmental distinction in buildings through studying the collection of residential and residential buildings in the United Kingdom and interpreted it as a legibility of the environment. The authors believed that this sense in the spaces designed with the distinction and separation attribute, identified the main characteristics of the formation of sustainable human spaces (Foruzandeh and Motabi, 2011).

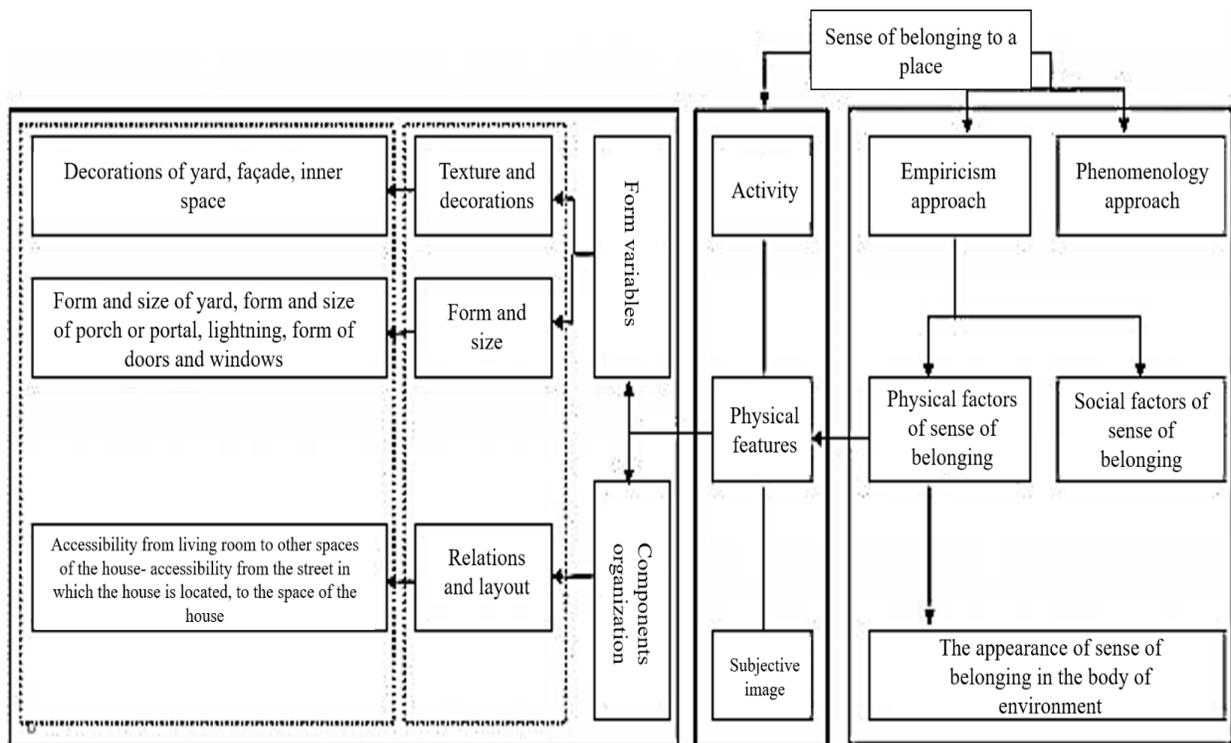


Diagram 1. Table of investigation of different approaches in relation to the sense of belonging to a place

Different dimensions of the sense of belonging to the place:

One of these dimensions, especially in environmental psychology, is social dimension, emotional dimension, cognitive dimension and body dimension, which is followed by a discussion of some of these dimensions (Hidalgo and Hernandez, 2001).

1. The social dimension of the sense of belonging to the place:

From the perspective of this approach, the sense of belonging to the environment is the result of the social interactions that occur in the environment. Based on this approach, the environment contains information and common social signs that humans interact with by understanding and decoding their environment. The place's location is also established as a strong factor in the resources of a person's social capital. Here are some indications that most of them belong to people who share a place rather than a place with physical presence (Foruzandeh and Motabi, 2011).

2. The emotional dimension (perception and recognition) of the sense of belonging to the place:

This aspect of belonging emphasizes the emotions and feelings of a person relative to his surroundings, and considers the sense of belonging to be interactive between the people and physical, social and activity stimuli. Emotional sense of belonging to a place refers to emotions, mental conditions, and mental states that people have about certain places, which, according to Giuliani's views, can be related both to the place itself and to the communities defined by it.

3. Contextual dimension of the place:

The physical environment affects the person's dependence by meeting a level of material and spiritual needs of a person. Location affiliation is strengthened and maintained when there is a constructive and interactive relationship between the needs of users and their environment. Meeting the needs (material and spiritual) provides functions such as these human-space interactions. Place attachment or functional attachment refers to the ability of a place that enables us to achieve our desired goals and activities (Foruzandeh and Motabi, 2011).

Sense of belonging to the educational and dormitory areas

During a research study on art students at the Ferdowsi College in Mashhad, Soleimani described the components for this issue; he believed that groups of students who are supported by professors are less likely to experience negative emotions and problems. In addition, when students do not find a worthwhile relationship between themselves and their professors, they become impolite and fall ill. The intimate and somewhat informal relationship affects the sense of belonging, but it is not up to the professor's invitation to dinner (Kasai, 2015).

The sense of belonging to others, the attachment to the environment, the sense of commitment to the environment, the quality of relationships in the friendship groups, the social acceptance, the participation in this direction, defines the groups in which the students become more affiliated with their participation. The experts in this topic, Roeser, Midgley, Verdant, combined a sense of belonging to the environment with a larger-scale behavioral impact structure. Students who are stronger in their friendship have a stronger and more powerful sense of belonging. Freeman is also one of the other people who believes in the issue that influences peer groups and other person-to-person relationships. Factors influenced by the feeling of belonging, according to researchers, and the degree of belonging to the faculty directly affects the following factors (Hasanpour Bagheri, Mahboubi and Hasanpour Bagheri, 2016):

Better individual fit with the environment, mental health, lowering depression symptoms, increasing academic motivation, preventing academic burnout, increasing activity and creating

competitiveness and progress, academic achievement, barriers to high-risk behaviors, long-term presence in the environment, better participation in group activities is followed by better performance in social and emotional activities and reduces the graduation school drop-out..

During his research, Pour Bagheri (2016) showed that home is at first sight an environment where all, and especially females, feel more comfortable in that environment. Therefore, it can be concluded that a dorm with the same characteristics of the home should be taken into account so that students enter into that environment, enter into their own personal home and inspire the same emotion as they enter the house. In her studies, she has come up with several features to gain a sense of belonging to female students, such as: (Hasanpour Bagheri, Mahboubi and Hasanpour Bagheri, 2016)

- 1) It should provide a desirable place for services and amenities
- 2) Succeeding social commitment to users
- 3) Create opportunities and places for social welfare
- 4) Improved the application and efficiency of services and resources
- 5) Promote dwelling life and deepen the relationship between the individual and the environment
- 6) Places to make the human soul happy and lively

Table 1. Theoretical foundation based on the approach (source: author)

Sense of Belonging to the place in students	Personal (Perceptive)	Commitment	Matlabi (2011)
		Ability	
		Motive	
	Social Factors	Cultural Rules	Hidalgo (2001), Falahat (2010)
		Relationship with peers	
		Support of Dormitory Management	
		Social Engagement	
		Social Interaction	
	Contextual	Amenities and welfare services	Matlabi (2011), Young (2010)
		Increased efficiency and welfare services	
		Improve the quality of spatial layout	
		Appropriate spatial communication	
		Create private privacy	
		Use of texture and color in spaces	
		Attention to Space Scale	Maleki (2010)
Increase sports facilities			
Provide free space			
	Create green space		

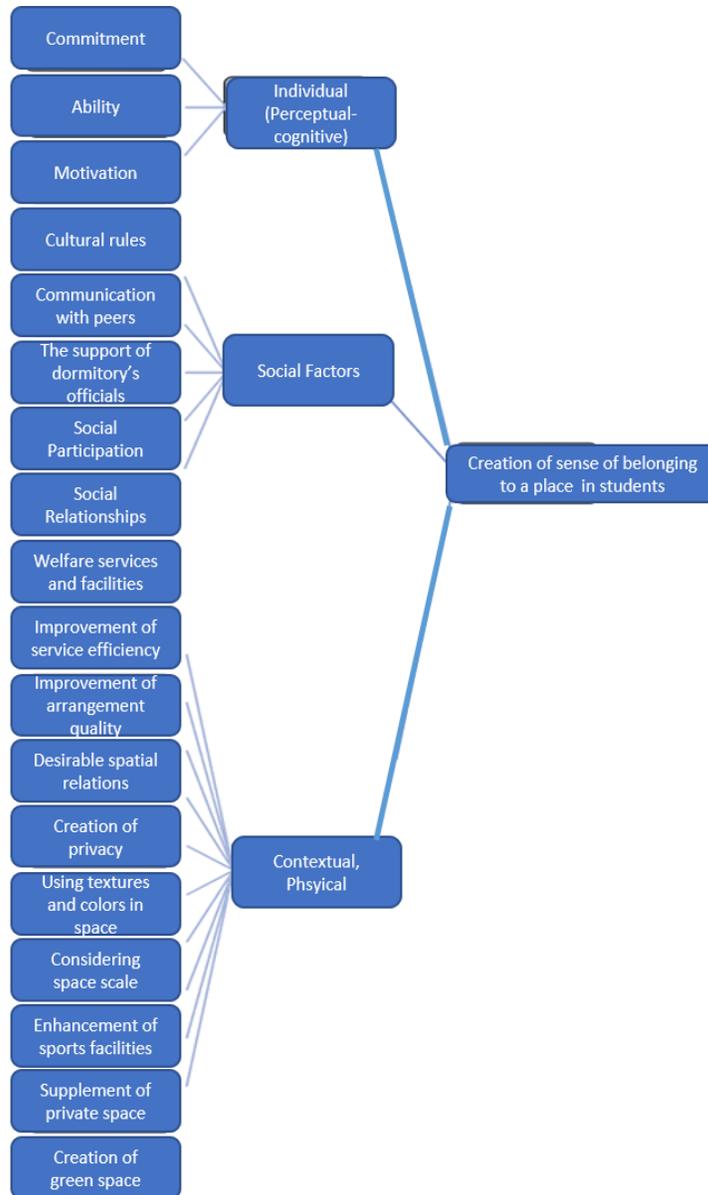


Diagram 2. Theoretical framework based on function (Source: authors)

Research Methodology

The present research was an applied study in terms of implementation and results. In this research, 575 students from Bahonar and Azad universities of Shiraz were selected as the statistical community. Through the Cochran formula and the Morgan table, 230 questionnaires were finally distributed and returned and analyzed. Using a quantitative method, a questionnaire has been prepared that the factors affecting the design of the dormitory complex of male students of art and the factors influencing the sense of belonging to the place through the psychology of the environment were presented in this questionnaire and the delivery of the specified statistical population included students` art courses at the Bahonar State and Azad Universities of Shiraz. To assess the validity of the opinions of the experts, and supervisor in the preparation of the questionnaire, the level of validity was in a desirable level. The data from the questionnaire was analyzed using SPSS software. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.880 after correction, which indicated a high reliability of

the questionnaire. Also, to test the hypotheses, three Pearson, T-single, and Friedman tests have been used.

Findings

In order to identify the factors affecting the sense of belonging to the students in the students, the relationship between the factors influencing quality of life, cultural factors, contextual factors, health and physical factors, and belonging to the students were analyzed through Pearson correlation coefficient. Table 2 shows the results of this analysis.

Table 2. Correlation Matrix of Research Variables (Source: Writer)

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Quality of life	1	-	-	-	-	-
2. Cultural factors	0.24 **	1	-	-	-	-
3. Contextual factors	0.47 **	0.40 **	1	-	-	-
4. Health Factors	0.22 **	0.30 **	0.31 **	1	-	-
5. Physical factors	0.27 **	0.36 **	0.48 **	0.32 **	1	-
6. sense of belonging to the place	0.35 **	0.33 **	0.45 **	0.35 **	0.39 **	1

As seen in the first column from the table above, there were significant positive correlations between the quality of life, cultural factors, physical factors and contextual factors in students' sense of belonging. Among the factors mentioned, contextual factors had the strongest relationship with the sense of belonging to the students' place, and the correlation between these two variables was 0.45. After contextual factors, physical factors with a factor of 0.39 had the strongest relationship with the sense of belonging to the students' place. The relationship between quality of life and health factors with the sense of belonging to the place was in the next level and the relationship between the two variables was equal to the place (35.0). Cultural factors had the least relationship with the sense of belonging to the students' place, with a coefficient of 0.33.

First Hypothesis: Paying attention to physical factors is one of the principles governing dormitory design for male art students.

To test the first hypothesis, t-test was used. To this end, the average effect of physical factors on dormitory design from students' point of view was compared with mean scores. Table 3 shows the results of this analysis.

Table 3. T-test results for studying the effect of physical factors on student's sense of belonging to the place.

Factor	Mean	Std. Deviation	Test value	T	Df	P
Contextual factors	74.44	16.50	55	15.23	166	0.0001

As seen in the table above, the average effect of physical factors on the sense of belonging to the students was 74.44 and the mean score was 55. Therefore, from the viewpoint of students, the effect of physical factors on dormitory design from students' point of view was higher than average, and this difference was significant at the level of 0.0001. Therefore, the first hypothesis of the research was confirmed.

Second hypothesis: It seems that paying attention to quality of life dimensions affects the feeling of belonging to the place in the students.

T-test was used to test the second hypothesis of the research. For this purpose, the average effect of quality of life on the sense of belonging to the place was compared from the students' point of view to the mean scores. Table 4 shows the results of this analysis.

Table 4. T-test results for studying the effect of quality of life on student's sense of belonging to the place.

Factor	Mean	Std. Deviation	Test value	T	Df	P
Quality of Life	40.03	6.83	27.5	23.62	165	0.0001

As seen in the table above, the average effect of quality of life on students' belonging to the place of the students was 40.03 and the average score was 27.5. Therefore, from the students' point of view, the effect of quality of life on the sense of belonging to the place was higher than average, and this difference was significant at the level of 0.0001. Therefore, the second hypothesis of the research was confirmed.

Hypothesis 3: Considering the dimensions of quality of life, cultural, physical, health and physical factors in students can help create a sense of belonging to the place.

One-sample t-test was used to evaluate the mean of factors influencing the sense of belonging to the place of students from the mean lower, higher or equal to the average. Table 5 shows the results of this analysis.

Table 5. T-test results for the mean of factors affecting the sense of belonging to place

Factor	Mean	Std. Deviation	Test value	T	Df	P
Quality of Life	40.03	6.83	27.5	23.62	165	0.0001
Cultural Factors	33.41	8.29	27.5	9.15	164	0.0001
Contextual factor	74.44	16.50	55	15.23	166	0.0001
Hygienic	14.09	4.33	11	9.21	166	0.0001
Physical	36.07	7.84	27.5	14.13	166	0.0001

As shown in the table above, the mean of factors of quality of life, cultural factors, contextual factors, health factors and physical factors affecting the sense of belonging in students was higher than the average, while the mean difference was significant. Therefore, the effect of these factors on students' sense of belonging was more than average.

Friedman's nonparametric test was used by the authors to compare the mean and median of factors affecting the sense of belonging and to study the relative importance of these factors. For this purpose, firstly, the score of each dimension has been divided into the number of questions, so that the mean of the dimensions were not affected by the number of questions. Then the rank of mean of different dimensions was compared with each other using Friedman test. Table 6 shows the results of this analysis.

Table 6. The results of Friedman test for comparing the rank average of factors affecting the place's sense of belonging

Factor	Mean Rank	Median	Chi-Square	Df	P
Quality of Life	3.75	8.2	63.24	4	0.0001

Cultural Factors	2.41	6.7			
Contextual factor	3.05	7.4			
Hygienic	2.96	7.0			
Physical	2.84	7.4			

As can be seen in the table above, the quality of life factor had the highest mean and median rank among other factors. In other words, respondents evaluated the quality of life as the most effective factor in forming a sense of belonging to the place. Physical factors were scored at 3.05 at the next level. Health, physical and cultural factors were respectively ranked next. Investigating the linear value and its significant level indicated that the difference between the rankings of the meanings was significant.

Conclusion

The sense of belonging to a place is one of the important notions in promoting the quality of human environments. This feeling, which is an important factor in the formation of communication bases of users and the environment, also leads to the creation of high-quality environments. Belonging to a place is a higher level of a sense of place, which has an influential role in the persistence of humans in their places. Belonging to a place based on the sense of place is beyond the awareness of being accommodated in one place. This sense leads to a person's link with the place where he considers himself to be a part of the place and, based on his experiences of signs, meanings, actions, and personality, has a role in the mind in his mind, and the place for him to be capable of being respected (Steele, 1981).

The sense of belonging to the place not only improves the coordination and function of the space of architecture and human beings, but also contributes to the sense of security, pleasure and emotional perception of individuals, and helps to identify the individual and their sense of satisfaction with the place. This sense makes space to be a place with special sensory and behavioral characteristics for particular people. Due to the increase in the length of time, the people communicate with one place, the recognition and perception of humans from the place increases, and with the possibility of a social relationship and a shared experience among individuals, feelings of belonging are formed.

With its particular spatial-social shift, the relocation of young students from their houses to dorms depicts a clear example of the manifestation of belonging to the place. The transition to a new cultural and social environment away from home should be deeply taken into consideration as this disturbance in the form of students' environmental attachments, shapes their experiences in a new place, ultimately leading to their personal development.

This issue, in turn, will have either a direct or an indirect effect on students' academic and behavioral performance. As many people are obliged to stay in such type of housing at least during their lifetimes, the need to their quantitative and qualitative improvement is felt more than ever. At the same time, the growing number of students in the country and the serious need to build new accommodation, make it necessary to carry out serious studies in order to achieve a more sustainable realization of this important issue. The present study aimed to promote the bonding of humans and places using previous studies in the field of sense of belonging to the place.

After identifying the main components for creating a sense of belonging to the place with the aid of the psychology of the environment, the strategies and approaches for designing this project have been summarized in Table (6).

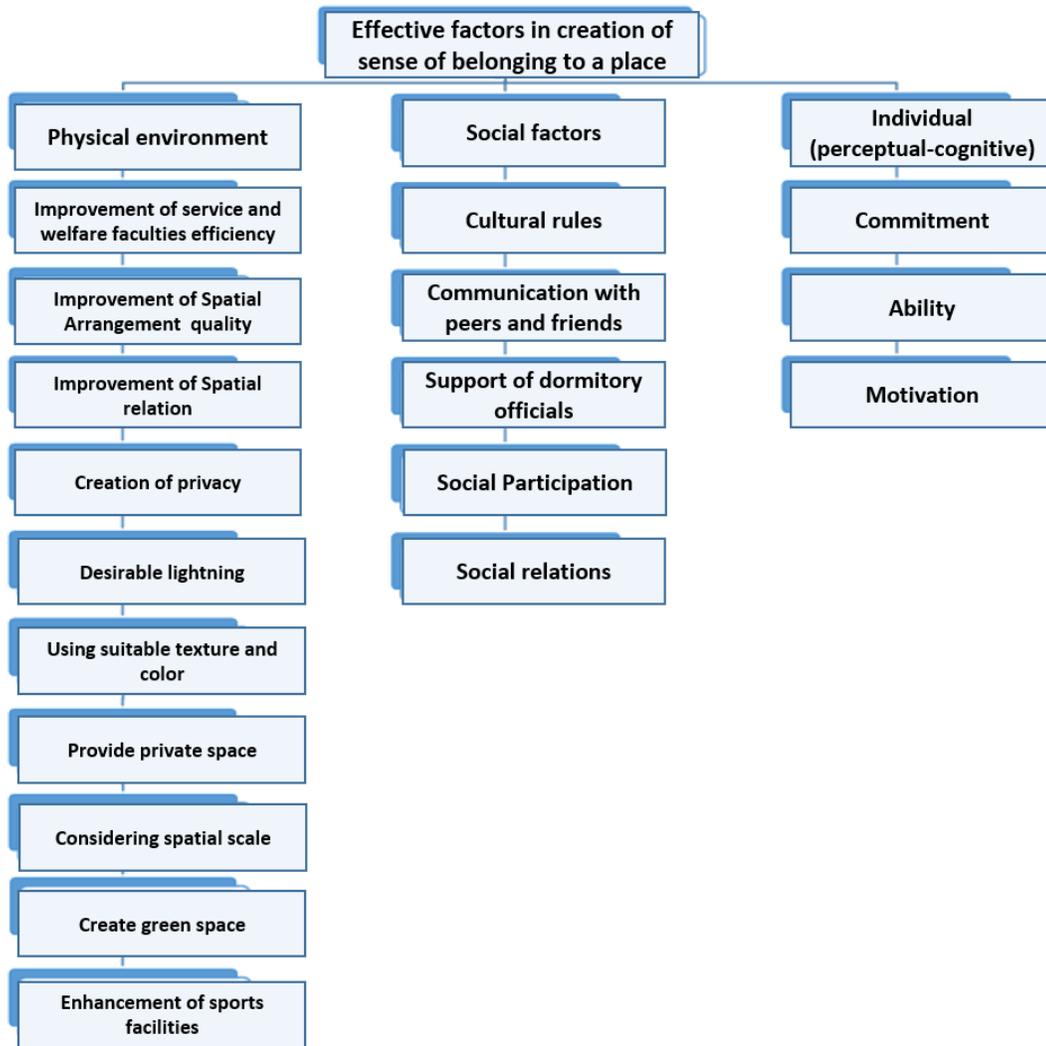


Diagram 2. The effective factors in the creation of the sense of belonging to the place

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