EFL TEACHER'S ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS REGARDING CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT STYLE: THE CASE OF GENDER AND TEACHING EXPERIENCES

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Abstract:

Classroom management is one of the main areas of concern expressed by educators at all levels. The purposes of this study were to examine whether there is any significant difference between inexperienced and experienced EFL teachers regarding their classroom management, and also this study investigated whether there is any significant difference between males and females EFL teachers in terms of classroom management. One hundred and eighty four teachers completed Behaviour and Instructional Management Scale (BIMS) (Martin & Sass, 2010). The findings showed statistically significant difference between the mean scores of inexperienced and experienced EFL teachers regarding their classroom management. Experienced EFL teachers were found to be more controlling (interventionist) on both behaviour and instructional management subtests. The findings also demonstrated that there was statistically significant difference between male and female EFL teachers in terms of classroom management, which is that male EFL teachers were more interventionist than their female counterparts on two subtests of the BIMS Inventory.

Keywords: classroom management, behaviour and instructional management, interventionist experienced teachers, inexperienced teachers

Introduction

For decades, different definitions of classroom management have been emerged. Karp (2002) described her philosophy of classroom management in this way "*In a classroom, the students have the right to learn safely and with dignity, just as the teacher has the right to teach safely and with dignity*" (p. 1). According to Foutz (2005) classroom management

should be used to meet both the students' and the teacher's needs. Classroom management was also defined as the teacher efforts to oversee classroom activities, consisting of learning, social interaction, and student behavior (Burden, 2005; Good & Brophy, 2006). In line with previous researchers, Doyle (2006) says that classroom management revolves around teachers' and students' attitudes and actions that influence students' behaviors in the classroom. Brophy (1986) also defines classroom management as a teacher's efforts to establish and maintain the classroom as an effective environment for teaching and learning. However, Savage and Savage (2009) define classroom management as

a) the prevention of problems;

b) responses when problems do occur.

In this definition, the major focus is on prevention of problems because one of the key variables in successful classroom management is an emphasis on preventative, rather than reactive, management techniques as shown by other researchers (Emmer & Stough, 2001). The value of classroom management knowledge, regardless of different definitions, for teachers has been supported through research literature (Brophy & Evertson, 1976; Shinn, Walker, & Stoner, 2002; Wang, Haertel, & Walberg, 1993) and classroom management strategies have been referred to as "*the most valuable skills set a teacher can have*" (Landau, 2001,p.4).

Concerning the importance of the classroom management, some researchers considered classroom management as the most important factor, even above student aptitude, affecting student learning (Wang, Haertel & Walberg, 1994). Research findings also continuously have shown that one of the keys to success in teaching is the teacher's ability to manage the classroom and to organize instruction (Brophy, 1988; Cakmak, 2008; Emmer, Evertson, & Worsham, 2000). In this regard, experience is very important. As Bosch (2006) says, classroom management is not just an endowed gift though it is true that some teachers can easily adapt techniques but many skills of classroom management can be achieved by training and experiencing in the field. Referring to this point, Fideler and Haskelhorn (1999) reported that the most significant barriers to professional success are poor classroom management (82%) and disruptive students (57%). Research in the area of classroom management shows that 15% of all beginning teachers leave teaching by the end of the first year, 33% off all teachers leave their professions in the first three year of teaching, 50% within the five (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2003). To sum up, classroom management problems was listed as a significant factor influencing their decision to leave their profession (Jones, 2006; Wang, Haertel & Walberg, 1994). Experienced teachers are able to manage the classroom settings and to deal effectively with the most

salient aspects of a classroom-unpredictability (Doyle, 1986).To compare with inexperienced teachers, experienced teachers are more flexible and adaptable (Kerrins & Cushing, 2000) and tend to less hesitation. Some researchers claim that it takes between four and seven years of experience for an individual to become a competent teacher (Carter & Doyle, 1995; Gonzalez & Carter, 1996; Varrella, 2000).

Theoretical framework

To explain teacher beliefs regarding child development, a framework was developed by Glickman and Tamashiro (1980) and Wolfgang (1995). They hypothesized a continuum consisting of three approaches to teacher-student interaction: noninterventionist, interventionist, and interactionalist. While teachers may demonstrate characteristics of each category in different situations, they are likely to use one approach more often than others (Wolfgang, 1995).The noninterventionists assume that the child has an inner drive that needs to find its expression in the real world (Wolfgang, 2005).

In non-interventionists students should be allowed to exert significant influence in the classroom and teachers should be less involved in adjusting student behaviours (Ritter & Hancock, 2007). Teachers adhering to the non-interventionist orientation are considered student-oriented and tend to employ tactics considered to use minimal teacher power (Witcher et al, 2008). Children are seen to have an inner potential, and opportunities to make decisions that enable personal growth (Burden, 1995).On the other end of this continuum are interventionist, those who are considered to be teacher-oriented and tend to take control of the situation by implementing immediate disciplinary tactic to control the behaviour (Witheret al., 2008). Interventionists believe that using teacher-generated rewards and punishments cause students learn appropriate behaviours (Ritter & Hancock 2007).

Between these two extremes are interactionalists that focus on the individuals to modify the external environment, as well as on the environment to shape the individuals. Interactionalists employ some of the same techniques as non-interventionists and Interventionists and try to find solutions satisfactory to both teacher and students (Glasser, 1986).

Although there is a lot of research on certain parts of the curriculum such as methodology and teaching materials, the issue of classroom management in English classes has been taken for granted. So, the present study seeks answers to the following questions:

1. Are experienced EFL teachers significantly different from inexperienced EFL teachers regarding their classroom management?

2. Are male EFL teachers significantly different from female EFL teachers regarding their classroom management?

Method

Participants

One hundred and eighty four EFL teachers participated in this study. The sample were selected through stratified random sampling based on Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) formula with confidence level of 95% (margin of error = 5%) among 293 English teachers who worked in Izeh, Iran. Of the sample 184 (50.3%) were female and 116 (49.7%) were male teachers.

In this study, seven years of teaching experience were chosen as the cut-off point for dividing inexperienced teachers and experienced teachers (Carter & Doyle, 1995; Gonzalez & Carter, 1996; Varrella, 2000). Participants' demographics are provided in Table 1.

Table 1: Demographics of study participants

Groups: Based on Years of Teaching Experience	Age		Gender	
	N	M	F	M
Group 1: 0-7 years	92	24.2	48.2%	51.8%
Group 2: 7-more	92	29.28	52.23%	47.77%
All participants	184	34.766	50.3%	49.7%

Instrument

Two instruments were used in order to gather data for this study: a personal information questionnaire to make a profile of demographic variables and Behaviour and Instructional Management Scale (BIMS).

Personal information questionnaire

In order to make a profile of demographic variables including, gender, age, teaching experience, a personal information questionnaire was used.

Behaviour and Instructional Management Scale (BIMS)

Martin, Yin, and Baldwin (1998) developed the Attitudes and Beliefs on Classroom Control (ABCC) Inventory and later improved and renamed it as Behaviour and Instructional Management Scale (BIMS) (Martin& Sass, 2010). Classroom management,

based on BIMS, consists of two dimensions: instructional management (IM), and behaviour management (BM).

Instructional management consists of classroom life such as establishing daily procedures, allocating materials, and monitoring students' independent work (Martin & Sass, 2010). Well-planned lessons help to prevent off-task behaviours. The manner in which tasks are managed contributes to the general classroom atmosphere and classroom management style (Burden, 1995; Weinstein & Mignano, 1993). Behaviour management consists of setting rules, establishing a reward structure, and providing opportunities for student input to prevent misbehaviour rather than a reaction to misbehaviour (Martin & Sass, 2010). The high scores in BIMS Inventory indicate the more controlling and the more interventionist approach and the lower scores are indicative of a less controlling ideology.

Based on some information received from the original authors there are two versions of this inventory: the complete version consists of 24 items (12 for IM & 12 for BM) and a short version that consists of a total of 12 items (6 for IM & 6 for BM). As the original authors recommend the full version of the inventory was used in this study. Respondents indicate on a 6-point, Likert-type scale (strongly agree, agree, slightly agree, slightly disagree, disagree, strongly disagree), how well each item describes their beliefs concerning classroom management.

In order to be applied in Iranian context, the BIMS inventory was translated and received feedback from experts; expert judgments.it was piloted for checking internal consistency, reliability. To assess the reliability of the BIMS Inventory Cronbach's α coefficient was run and turned out to be .76.

Procedure

Using both e-mailing and giving each EFL teachers a final copy of BIMS inventory, the data of this study were collected. The time the teachers spent answering the questionnaire was about 15minutes. The procedure of gathering data almost lasted for one month.

Data analysis

To answer the research questions, the mean scores of the participants in BIMS Inventory were analysed by an independent sample T-test. The statistical package for social sciences (SPSS), 21th version of this software was used in this respect.

Results

This study sought the differences in EFL teachers' attitudes and beliefs regarding classroom management style between experienced and inexperienced EFL teachers, and male and female EFL teachers. Table 2 summarizes the results of the descriptive statistics and independent sample t-test in each of the subtests of BIMS Inventory.

Table 2: Comparison of the mean scores of inexperienced and experienced teachers on BIMS dimensions

| BIMS Dimensions | Teachers | | t | df | Sig(2-tailed) | Effect size[a] |
	Inexperienced	Experienced				
Instructional Management	M = 16.04	M = 60	-34.1*		.000	.86
	SD = 6.95	SD = 10.21	182			
Behaviour Management	M = 19.02	M = 58.41	-31.08*		.000	.84
	SD = 8.04	SD = 14.1	182			

*p< .05

[a]Eta squared

As shown in Table 2, an independent t-test was performed to compare the mean scores of inexperienced and experienced EFL teachers on BIMS Inventory. There was a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of inexperienced (M = 16.04, SD = 6.95) and experienced (M = 60, SD = 10.21) EFL teachers on instructional management subtest of BIMS Inventory regarding their classroom management,(t (182)=-34.1, p =.000< .05). Also on behaviour management subtest of BIMS Inventory a statistically significant difference was found between the mean scores of inexperienced (M = 19.02, SD = 8.04) and experienced (M = 58.41, SD = 14.1) EFL teachers, (t (182) =-31.08, p=.000< .05). Taken together these results suggest that there is a statistically significant difference between inexperienced and experienced EFL teachers regarding their classroom management. Taking the eta squared value of .86 and .84 respectively for instructional and behaviour management subtests of BIMS Inventory into consideration it can be concluded that the magnitude of the difference in the mean score of inexperienced and experienced EFL teachers regarding their classroom management is very large.

The second research question of this study focused on the difference between male and female EFL teachers regarding the classroom management. To answer this research question an independent sample t-test was conducted the results of this test and the descriptive statistics were presented in Table 3. There was a statistically

significant difference in the mean scores of male EFL teachers (M = 42.65, SD = 26.64) and female teachers (M = 33.39, SD = 19.01; t (182) =3.95, p = .000< .05) on instructional management subtest of BIMS Inventory. There was also a statistically significant difference was found between the mean scores of male EFL teachers (M = 40.51, SD = 27.43) and female EFL teachers (M = 37.12, SD = 21.14; t (182) = 2.89, p = .008< .05) on behavior management subtest of BIMS Inventory. Given our eta squared value of .07 and .06 respectively for instructional and behaviour management subtests of BIMS Inventory it can be concluded that the difference in the mean scores of male EFL teachers and female EFL teachers in terms of classroom management is moderate.

Table 3: Comparison of the mean scores of male and female teachers on BIMS subtests

	Male	Female	t	df	Sig(2-tailed)	Effect size[a]
Instructional	M = 42.65	M = 33.39	3.95*	182	.000	.07
Management	SD=26.64	SD=19.01				
Behaviour	M = 40.51	M = 37.12	3.53*	182	.008	.06
Management	SD= 27.43	SD= 21.14				

*p< .05
[a]Eta squared

Discussions

As the high score indicates the more controlling and the more interventionist approach and lower score are indicative of a less controlling ideology, based on BIMS these results suggest that as the teacher become more experienced, they are found to be more controlling (interventionist). As Table 2 indicates, there was a significant difference between the mean scores of inexperienced and experienced teachers on behaviour and instructional management Inventory. That is the years of experience have significant effect on teachers' beliefs and attitudes regarding their classroom management. It means that none of the groups seems to support the student oriented management style and give permission to the students to have maximum control, or to have the main responsibility of developing their own rules. These findings are in line with the previous studies of Martin and Baldwin (1993), Swanson, O'Connor, and Cooney (1990), and Bailey and Johnson (1999) but in contrast with the findings of the study of Rahimia and Asadollahia (2011) claiming that teachers' classroom management orientations were not related to their experiences.

Table 3 compares the mean scores of male and female EFL teachers on BIMS subtests, and as it can be seen the mean scores of male EFL teachers were bigger than the mean scores of the female teachers on both two subtests of the BIMS Inventory, so

they scored more interventionist than their female counterparts on two dimensions of the BIMS Inventory. Taken together, it can be concluded that there is a significant difference between the mean score of male and female's EFL teachers in terms of classroom management. These findings support the previous findings of Nancy and Yin (1997) study that revealed males scored significantly higher than females on both the instructional management and behavior management but in contrast with the findings of Ünal and Ünal (2012) results that indicated there were no significant differences between male and female teachers on their classroom management beliefs on behaviour and management scale. As it can be seen the results of this study are in contrast with the results of Ünal and Ünal (2012) results.

Implications of the study

Classroom management is considered one of the most challenging and widespread problems in education (Johns, MacNaughton, & Karabinus, 1989; Long & Frye, 1989; Willower, Eidell, & Hoy, 1967).Therefore, the teachers can benefit the results of this study to understand the concerns of both beginning and experienced teachers. Understanding these results should lead to changes in better understanding of EFL classroom management and enhancing in teaching, better assistance during their beginning years of teaching, EFL teacher education programs can use the experience of EFL teachers, the improved professional development for EFL teachers at all experience levels, and better preparation of teachers. Such findings can also help EFL teacher educators in revising their programs.

Using the findings of this study, EFL teacher education programs in Iran can improve their educations and training more influential EFL teachers.

Conclusion

The primary goals of this study were to examine whether there is any significant difference between the mean scores of inexperienced and experienced teachers regarding their classroom management also this study investigated whether there is any significant difference between the mean scores of male and female in terms of classroom management. The results indicated that there was a significant difference between the mean scores of inexperienced and experienced teachers regarding classroom management. The findings of this study revealed that experienced teachers are more likely to prefer to be in control in their classrooms than inexperienced teachers while interacting with students. In other words, as the teachers become more

experienced they are found to be more controlling (interventionist) on both behaviour and instructional management subtests. Based on the results it can be concluded that the years of experiences have significant effect on teachers' beliefs and attitudes. The findings of this study have also shown that, there was a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of males and females in terms of classroom management. Male teachers were more interventionist than their female counterparts on two sub-scales of the BIMS Inventory were.

Still there are some questions remained unanswered. Investigating the relationship between classroom management and the educational level, investigating the match between teachers' beliefs about classroom management styles and their behaviours in the classroom are fruitful areas for future research.

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