

## **The impact of personality traits on classroom management styles of secondary school English teachers in Bushehr**

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### **Abstract**

How to manage an English class is also affected by different factors such as personality traits. The present study is an attempt to explore the relationship between classroom management styles and personality traits in secondary school English teachers in Bushehr. It also examines the differences in teachers' classroom management styles in terms of to the gender. Thirty male and female English teachers in secondary schools formed the sample of the study. The subjects received two questionnaires of NEO –FFI personality traits questionnaire and Attitude and Beliefs on Classroom Control Inventory (ABCCI), a classroom management inventory. The findings revealed a significant relationship between classroom management styles and Neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience and conscientiousness. Extraversion and openness showed a significantly positive relationship with people management. Also, behavioral management and conscientiousness had a meaningful relation with instructional management. However, neuroticism had a negative relationship with instructional management. Gender cannot be regarded as an effective factor in classroom management style.

**Keywords:** Classroom management styles, personality traits, secondary school teachers.

### Introduction

Classroom management is viewed as the number one concern by many educators in schools. From 1967 to 1997 classroom management was identified as the most important difficulty which teachers face with (Jackson, 2005). Many teachers lack training in the use of effective classroom management strategies. Marzano (2003) found that classroom managerial problems could have a great impact on the effectiveness of teaching and quality of learning. Emmer and Hickman (1991) identified that classroom management has a major influence on teacher performance and a need for student learning. The factors which influence classroom management styles can be divided into two major categories. One of these two factors is personal factor, that is, the effect upon students by teachers is much greater than that by parents or school administrators. What teachers say and do are the sources of imitating for students, and what they say and do are related to their personality. For this reason, understanding and analyzing the personality of teachers is necessary in exploring classroom management styles. Personality is a unique characteristics and influences people's behavior in different circumstances. Moreover, Hurtz and Donovan (2000) found that personality could predict teachers' performance. The personality of teachers could profoundly affect classroom management. So this study was to examine secondary teachers' personality characteristics and its relationship with classroom management styles.

The present study focused on the following objectives: To study the relationship between classroom management styles and personality trait in secondary school teachers.

To investigate the difference in secondary school teachers' classroom management styles in terms of the gender, class size, type of school, year of teaching experience, educational level, teaching skills and age.

### **Research Questions**

The following questions were focused on in this study:

1. Is there a relationship between secondary school teachers' personality traits and their classroom management styles?
2. Is there a difference in teachers' classroom management styles relative to the gender, class size, type of school, year of teaching experience, educational level, teaching skills?

### **Method**

#### **Participants**

In order to achieve the objectives of the study, 30 male and female well-experienced teachers were selected from secondary schools of Bushehr. All the participants were randomly selected from the schools.

#### **Instrumentation**

##### **Demographic Survey**

A short demographic survey was developed to obtain information on the teachers' personal and professional characteristics. There were either fill-in blank or forced choice responses in the items of the survey. Using these types of response format helps provide consistency across the teachers by limiting their responses to those that are relevant.

##### **Attitudes and Beliefs on Classroom Control Inventory**

Attitude and Beliefs on Classroom Control Inventory (ABCC) (Martin, Yin, & Baldwin, 1997), was used to assess various aspect of teachers' beliefs toward classroom management. The ABCC includes 24 items with a 4-point Likert scale format. Within this inventory, classroom management was defined as a multi-faceted construct that includes three board dimensions:

instructional management (14 items: 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 13, 17, 20, 21, 23) “includes aspects such as monitoring seatwork, structuring daily routines, and allocating materials”, people management (8 items: 3, 4, 9, 11, 14, 16, 22, 24) “pertains to what teachers believe about student as persons and what teachers do to develop the teacher-student relationship,” and behavioral management ( 4 items: 12, 15, 18, 19) “includes setting rules, establishing ward structure, and providing opportunities for student input.” Each subscale was derived to assess a continuum of control ranging from interventionist to interactionism to non-interventionist (Martin et al., 1998). The numerical values associated with responses to items on each subscale were summed (scoring is reversed for items: 3, 4, 9, 11, 12, 14, 16, 18, 19, 22, 24) and divided by the number of items to obtain a mean score. The purpose of using mean scores is to allow direct comparison among the three dimensions measured by ABCC and provide scores that reflect the original scale of measurement. Possible scores could range from 1.00 to 4.00 on each dimension with high scores representing a stronger interventionist perspective. A copy of this instrument in English and Persian was adopted from Badiiei (2008).

### The NEO-FFI

The NEO-FFI is a personality inventory based on the Five-Factor Model of personality. The NEO-FFI is intended as a brief, comprehensive measure of typical personality traits that provides one score for each of five major domains (factors) of personality characteristics: Neuroticism, Extraversion, and Openness to Experience, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness. The NEO-FFI is available in two forms: 1. Form S is a self-report version that was used in this study, 2. Form R is a version for rating by spouse and peers. However, no form R of the NEO-FFI has been published. Form S consists of 60 items and each of the five dimensions is assessed by 12

statements. For each statement, the participants rated themselves on a five-point Likert scale from 0 to 4, with verbal anchors of strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, and strongly agree.

Twenty-seven items on the inventory are reversed score. After calculating T scores for each domain, T scores of 56 or higher are considered high, T scores ranging from 55 to 45 are considered average and T scores of 44 or lower are considered low. There is no time limit for the NEO-FFI. Most respondents require 10 to 15 minutes to complete it but old respondents and those with limited reading skills may take longer. The area in which the NEO inventory has proven its value most conclusively is in personality research or any research on personality correlates (McCrae & Costa, 1992). Each of the five domains of the NEO-FFI has been found to possess adequate internal consistency and temporal stability ( $\alpha = .68$  to  $.86$ , Costa & McCrae, 1992;  $r = .86$  to  $.90$  (Robins, Fraley, Roberts, & Trzesniewski, 2001).

### **Procedure**

To achieve the objectives of this study certain procedures were pursued. At the outset, 30 English teachers were randomly selected from secondary schools. Then the researcher called or sent an email and asked them to participate in this study. After their acceptance, the researcher visited them to give two instruments and the participants were fully briefed the goals of the study and also on the process of completing the questionnaires; this briefing was given in Persian through explaining and exemplifying the process of choosing answers. In order to avoid any misunderstanding due to the lack of vocabulary, grammar knowledge, and cultural differences and also to collect reliable data, the researcher administered the Persian version of the Attitudes and Beliefs on Classroom Control Inventory and the NEO-FFI.

Subsequently, the administrated questionnaires were scored to specify the participants' personality traits and classroom management styles.

### Data analysis

Data collected from the surveys were entered into a computer file for analysis using the SPSS 22. The analysis was divided into two sections: descriptive and inferential. The descriptive statistics were used to summarize the data to provide a comprehensive profile of the personal and professional characteristics of the teachers as well as their classroom management styles, and personality traits. The inferential statistical analysis includes Pearson product moment correlation analysis, one way ANOVAs.

### Result

**Table 1 Gender Frequency Distribution of the Participants**

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	13	43.3
Female	17	56.7

The majority of teachers were females 17 (56.7%), with 13 (43.3%) reporting their gender as male. The teachers were asked to indicate their highest level of education. Their responses were summarized using frequency distributions (Table 2).

### Description of the Scaled Variables

The Attitudes and Beliefs of Classroom Control Inventory (Martin, Yin, & Baldwin, 1997), and the NEO-Five Factor Inventory (McCrae & Costa, 1992) were scored according to the authors' protocols. Tables 2 and 3 present results of this analysis.

**Table 2 Descriptive Statistics of the Scaled Variables**

Subscales	Number	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum	Range
Attitudes and Beliefs of Classroom Control Inventory	30					
• Instructional management		2.973	.362	2.33	3.80	1.47
• People management		2.438	.485	1.62	3.33	1.71
• Behavior management		2.650	.397	1.50	3.00	1.50
NEO- Five Factor Inventory	30					
• Neuroticism		25.30	12.501	10.00	58.00	25.30
• Extraversion		46.40	9.212	30.00	60.00	46.40
• Openness		44.80	7.535	35.00	60.00	44.80
• Agreeableness		46.40	10.122	30.00	60.00	46.40
• Conscientiousness	47.06	7.041	30.00	60.00	47.06	

The teachers had a mean of 2.973 (SD=.362) for instructional management. Actual scores on this subscale ranged from 2.33 to 3.80, with possible scores ranging from 1.00 to 4.00. Higher scores on instructional management indicated a more interventionist (controlling) belief regarding this particular factor. The average score for people management was 2.438(SD=.48). The range of actual scores for people management was from 1.62 to 3.33. Possible scores on this subscale could range from 1.00 to 4.00. Teachers had a mean score of 2.650 (SD=.397) for behavior management. Actual scores ranged from 1.50 to 3.00, with possible scores from 1.00 to 4.00. Higher scores on these two subscales (people management, behavior management) provided evidence of more interventionist (controlling) beliefs in classroom management.

Descriptive statistics for teachers' scores on the five personality domains are also provided in Table 2. The mean score for neuroticism was 25.30 (SD=12.501) with actual scores ranged from 10.00 to 58.00. The average score for extraversion was 46.40 (SD=9.212), with actual scores ranged from 30.00 to 60.00. Actual scores for openness factor ranged from 35.00 to 60.00 with a mean score of 44.80 (SD=7.535). The teachers had a mean score of 47.06 (SD=10.122) for agreeableness. Actual scores on this factor ranged from 30.00 to 60.00. Mean score for conscientiousness was 47.06 (SD=7.041) ranging from 30 to 60.

Two research questions were developed for this study. Each question was addressed using inferential statistical analyses. The Pearson correlation was run to test the first research question. The result of the Pearson correlation in Table 3 indicates that there is a significant relationship between some classroom management style subscales and five factors of personality trait.

**Table 3 Pearson Correlation between classroom management styles and personality traits**

	Instructional management	People management	Behavioral management	Neuroticism	Extraversion	Openness	Agreeableness	Conscientiousness
Instructional management	1							
Pearson Correlation		-.240	-.021	-.389*	.211	.121	.115	.343*
Sig.(1-tailed)		.101	.457	.017	.262	.262	.273	.032
N	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
People management	-.240	1						
Pearson Correlation			.479**	.298	.488**	.629**	.095	-.230
Sig.(1-tailed)			.004	.055	.0003	.000	.308	.111
N	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
Behavioral management	-.021	.479**	1					
Pearson Correlation				.143	.492**	.402*	-.082	.027
Sig.(1-tailed)				.225	.003	.014	.333	.443
N	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	0

\*Correlation is significant at the .05 level (1-tailed)

\*\*correlation is significant at the.01 level (1-tailed).



One-way ANOVA was used to examine the interplay between classroom management beliefs mean scores and gender, class size, type of school, year of teaching experience, educational level, teaching skills and age (Table 4).

**Table 4 One-way ANOVA for classroom management styles on the basis of gender**

		df	Mean Square	F	Sig	Sum of squares
Instructional Management	Between groups	1	.025	.183	.675	.025
	Within groups	28	.135			3.790
	Total	29				3.81
People management	Between groups	1	.605	2.715	.111	.605
	Within groups	28	.223			6.243
	Total	29				6.848
Behavioral management	Between groups	1	.000	.002	.964	.000
	Within groups	28	.163			4.575
	Total	29				4.575

The results indicated that there were no significant differences between the groups on the basis of the gender, class size, and type of school, year of teaching experience, educational level, and teaching skills.

### Discussion

In this study, we examined the relationship between secondary school teachers' the classroom management styles and their personality traits and also the difference between these management styles and some demographic variables.

We found that teachers' instructional management styles were positively related to conscientiousness and negatively to neuroticism. This result is in line with Bakhshayesh (2013) who found a positive relationship between instructional management and conscientiousness. Also, the negative relationship between instructional management and neuroticism was also reported by Martin, Baldwin and Yin (1995) and Bakhshayesh (2013).

The results indicate that people management is positively related to openness which is in line with Bakhshayesh (2013) and Martin, Baldwin and Yin (1995). A major explanation for openness is that the world continues changing; therefore, teachers need to actively face and address the difficulties and maintain a good relationship with students. At last, the behavioral management was positively related to extraversion and openness. This finding is corroborated by Aliakbari and Darabi (2012) who examined the possible relationship between teachers' transformational leadership style, their personality traits, experience, education level, and efficacy of their classroom management. Small, but significant, relationships were also found between efficacy of class management and extraversion, openness, and neuroticism. Also, the present results are in line with Jalili and Mall-Amiri (2015) who found a significant difference between extrovert and introvert EFL teachers and their classroom management. This study revealed a significant difference between extrovert and introvert EFL teachers and their classroom management. It is found that the extrovert EFL teachers outperformed the introvert teachers in managing adult EFL classes. To explain this, we can say the extraversion and openness demand communication and interaction with different people. If these characteristics are observed in teachers, they show stronger interactions. If teachers have high degree of extraversion and openness, it means that teachers could have a good rapport with students.

At last, the results show that there is no difference in classroom management styles and demographic variables. This finding may be due to this fact that in Iran teachers receive similar trainings. As a result, in spite of differences in age, gender, university type, major, job experience, they have similar classroom management styles.

### **Conclusions**

The purpose of this study was to examine relationship between each dimension of teacher classroom management styles and their personality traits, as well as to investigate the differences between teachers' management styles and their demographic information.

Educational research on classroom management has expanded knowledge of what effective classroom managers do and how they do it. These studies focus on teacher actions to create, implement, and maintain classroom environments that support learning (Strong, 2002).

Teachers play different roles in classrooms, one of the most important is that of classroom manager. A direct link has been established between classroom management and positive student outcomes. Effective teaching and learning cannot happen in a poorly managed classroom. Well-managed classroom provides an environment in which teaching and learning can develop well.

Teacher personality has also been found to be an important variable in teachers' Classroom management approaches. Personality traits found to be important aspects of effective teaching and include assertiveness, willingness to take risks, independence, self-confidence, creative, warm and loving (Baldwin, 1990). Numerous researchers have shown that there is a relationship between personality types and classroom management and student learning outcomes (e.g., Brophy & Rohrkemper, 1982, as cited in Chambers, Henson, & Sienty, 2001). Some research has emphasized that the personality characteristics of the teacher is the most significant variable in a successful classroom management. For example, Jackson and Pauly (1999, as cited in Chambers, Henson, & Sienty, 2001) found that teachers' personality traits affect how teachers communicate with their students. They found that teachers with certain personality traits were more capable of shifting to meet their students' various needs and that this ability may be the most important factor in determining the success or failure of students in the classroom.

Teachers report that classroom management is one of the most demanding jobs in education. Teachers' personality traits can affect their beliefs regarding discipline and classroom management (Martin, Yin, & Baldwin, 1997).

### **Implications of the study**

The study revealed that teachers' personality traits play a significant role in their classroom management styles even beyond their gender, educational level, years of experience, major, university type, and school kind. This finding should be used to raise the awareness of both teachers and administrators at schools. Both school teachers and administrators should realize that many factors, including teachers' personality traits predispose teachers to using certain classroom management styles. For this reason, both teachers and administrators should accept the fact that teachers will have different classroom management beliefs. Moreover, teachers should be conscious of the relationship between personality traits and classroom management styles because such a relationship may not only affect their classroom behaviors, but also have significant impact on the way students learn. While personality traits are not easily changed, classroom management styles have been empirically proved to be modifiable.

Therefore, one of the styles that teachers can take is to systemically alternate their classroom management styles. Using a variety of styles not only increases teachers' flexibility of thinking and reduce the restrictiveness of habitual thinking, but also expands students' learning modes. Furthermore, two of the NEO domains –openness and extraversion– promise to be of particular interest in the area of educational psychology. Scores on these domains may be a useful tool in predicting teaching success. In the present study openness and extraversion explained a significant amount of variance in classroom management orientations.

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