

**New EFL Teachers' Perceptions  
of Classroom Discipline  
Problems in Saudi Public Schools**

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**Abstract**

This study aims at investigating problems of classroom discipline as perceived by new EFL teachers in Saudi public schools. A descriptive method was employed. A questionnaire prepared by the researcher was administered. Data analysis was conducted by descriptive statistics using SPSS, correlation coefficients, t-test, Mann-Whitney, ANOVA and Cronbach's alpha. A total of 81 new EFL teachers comprised the sample of the study. Results of the study indicated that the most problematic misbehavior of students are copying homework from others, cheating, Speaking in Arabic, lying, and disrespecting the EFL teacher. The study recommends offering life skills programs to students, as well as conducting preventive training programs to novice teachers before the start of the academic year to address some misbehavior problems this study revealed.

**Key words:** New teachers, EFL, discipline, classroom problems.

### ملخص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى التعرف على مشكلات النظام الصفّي التي تواجه معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية المبتدئين كما يراها هؤلاء المعلمون في المدارس العامة الحكومية في المملكة العربية السعودية، والكشف عن أثر المتغيرات المستقلة (المرحلة الدراسية، الجنس، والمؤهل) في إجابات المعلمين. استخدمت الدراسة استبانة مكونة من ٢٨ بنداً أعدها الباحث استناداً إلى الدراسات السابقة والأدب التربوي حيث طلب من عينة البحث ( ٨١ معلماً جديداً ) تحديد درجة حدة كل مشكلة باختبار واحدة من أربع إجابات (مشكلة كبيرة، مشكلة متوسطة، مشكلة بسيطة، ليست مشكلة). أشارت نتائج الدراسة إلى أن المعلمين يتفاوتون في تقديرهم لتلك المشكلات، لكن الدراسة أظهرت الحاجة إلى برامج في مهارات الحياة يخضع لها الطلاب وبرامج تدريبية في مواجهة مشكلات النظام يخضع لها المعلمون الجدد في اللغة الإنجليزية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: اللغة الإنجليزية، المعلم المبتدئ ، النظام الصفّي، مشكلات النظام الصفّي

## Introduction

**"Do not lose control of the classroom!" is the first piece of advice educational supervisors direct to new teachers. One of the biggest concerns for every new teacher is classroom management. Successful teaching and learning depend highly on effective classroom management displayed by teachers. Classroom discipline is what worries every new or experienced teacher as it is difficult to maintain an effective learning environment if students do not cooperate with their teachers or do not follow their directions or do not observe classroom rules. Classroom manager is a major role every teacher should know how to play effectively in his or her classroom. It is one of three major roles or functions a teacher performs which include instructional strategies and classroom curriculum design (Marzano, Mrzano, Pickering, 2003). There are behavior problems expected to arise in any classroom, regardless of the subject the teacher is teaching or the number of years the teacher has spent at schools. Such problems may occur inside the classroom where effective teachers are responsible for. "Students experience difficulties at home, which spill over into the classroom; students experience problems with peers during class breaks and in the classroom which often involve the teacher; and students experience mood changes which can generate problems,"(Long & Frye, p.4, 1985).**

**There are, however, behavior problems that may occur only inside the English as a foreign language EFL classroom such as speaking the native language of learners and refusing to speak in English (Alnofaie, 2010; Al-Shammari, 2011; Adnan et al., 2014) and having an unfavorable attitude towards English as a foreign language representing a foreign culture (Al-Awadh, 2000). This paper will try to shed some lights on the classroom behavior problems encountered by an EFL teacher at public schools in Saudi Arabia. Some of these discipline problems may also be experienced by other teachers in these schools.**

### **Management, control or discipline**

The researcher has chosen the term discipline as a title for this paper as it is more appropriate for teachers than other alternatives like "classroom management" or "control". The latter two terms are both connected to each other as management cannot be achieved without control. Control is defined as to exercise authority or dominating influence over or direct others (Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary, 1987, p. 285). There are dictatorial connotations associated with "control" that are considered by progressive teachers as unacceptable in a world that respect children's rights to express their opinions and take part in the process of their own learning. "The use of the word 'control' offends some teachers, as it smacks of an authoritarian regime which denies children any rights or respect"(Robertson, p. ix, 1996).

The concept of management is attributed to the "scientific management" philosophy which began when Frederick Taylor did his first time-and-motion studies at Bethlehem Steel in the 1890s. Management, for Taylor, is to plan out fully in writing and in detail one day in advance the work each man is to do, how it is to be done and the exact time allowed for doing it (Taylor, p.39,1947). Some curriculum scholars question the success of such a centralized environment when one person has a dominating influence over others. Doll, for example, suggests a better form of management that is non-centralized; a sense of control based on "just the right amount of disturbance,"(Doll, p.223, 2012). He does call for an end of the usual rubrics of classroom management which are the centralizing of control or syllabi, rules of conduct and traditional evaluations. "Control is dissipated into the group, community, network system, and indeed frames itself (where) lesson plans are nonlinear and for me, recursive, depending on the interactions developing within the situations"(p.226).

Discipline is a kind of self-control where the actions of students are governed by intrinsic elements rather than an outside authority exercising power over them. One can define Discipline as the actions that facilitate the development of self-control, responsibility, and character" (Savage & Savage, 2010, p.8).

## **Review of Classroom Discipline Research**

**Classroom discipline across many academic subjects has been the focus of educational studies for many years. It has been indicated over the last 30 years that classroom discipline plays a fundamental role affecting student achievement. One of the major studies that reinforces this vital role of classroom discipline is the meta-analysis research conducted by Marzano and his colleagues (Marzano, Mrzano, Pickering, 2003) that included the findings from more than 100 previous separate studies. Marzano studied four components of effective classroom management which included rules and procedures, disciplinary intervention, teacher-student relationships and mental set. This meta-analysis that quantitatively combines the results from a number of studies indicates that, on the average, students in classes where effective management techniques are employed have achievement scores that are 20 percentile point higher than students in classes where effective management techniques are not employed.**

**Two major books on classroom management are considered the major resources for research in this field which include one study for the elementary level (Evertson, Emmer, & Worsham, 2003) and one for the secondary level (Emmer, Evertson, & Worsham, 2003). The interventions applied in these two studies resulted in improved teacher behavior and appropriate student behavior in experimental group classes.**

**In an EFL context, Cabaroglu(2012) studied pre-service teachers' perception of classroom management, misbehavior and their own ability to teach in relation to classroom management. The result of the study suggested that these new teachers have a narrow conception of classroom management, often focusing on the reactive or corrective strategies rather than on the preventive or proactive strategies.**

**Macias & Sanches (2015) studied the extent to which classroom management constituted a problem to pre-service foreign language teachers in a teacher education program at a public university in Colombia. Student teachers in this study indicated that classroom management is a serious problem for most pre-service teachers in their**

practicum across primary and secondary school settings. The classroom management challenges these pre-service teachers usually encounter, regardless of the school setting, range from inadequate conditions in the classroom environment, pre-service teachers' seeing themselves as college students as opposed to teachers, and learners' negative attitudes and low language levels to more explicit acts of misbehavior such as physical aggression, insulting or bullying other students, and showing disrespect to the teacher.

Students' misbehavior can seriously obstruct language teaching and learning processes, and the type of learners' misbehavior and the frequency of them vary according to gender. Mohammadi (2013) found that male young EFL learners' misbehaviors were 4.5 times more than female learners' misbehaviors and there were misbehaviors that were not common in female classrooms. Most of male and female learners' misbehavior were classified in the verbal category.

Rahimi & Asadollah (2012) investigated EFL teachers' classroom management orientations and their relationships with teachers' individual differences and contextual variables. They found that teachers' classroom orientations were not related to their age, gender, experience and school type; however, teachers' educational level and the district of school location were related to only instructional management indicating that teachers who worked in unprivileged areas were found to be less interventionist and less controlling teachers.

In Japan, Sakui (2007) studied classroom management difficulties that arise in Japanese EFL classroom when teachers try to teach English communicatively, and how the teachers conceptualize and tackle the classroom management problems they encounter. It was a challenging task for the teachers to conduct communicative language teaching (CLT) while managing their classroom because of the spatial arrangement of classrooms required by CLT activities, the changes in students' and teachers' expected roles, and increased cognitive demands on students. Japanese teachers reported several problems they face in their classrooms which include class-size, emotionally and psychologically unstable students, diversity of students' backgrounds,

change of values and experiences outside schools, the disappearance of respect for teachers and schools.

In China, however, the picture is different. Ding and his colleagues (2008) investigated the most frequent and troublesome type of misbehavior and teachers' perceived needs for help in classroom management. The majority of Chinese teachers, from lower elementary to high school, does not think classroom discipline is a great concern with 'daydreaming' as the most frequent and troublesome misbehavior.

Every environment is different from the other, so classroom discipline problems and strategies are different. In an UAE context, EFL teachers encounter many difficulties in public high schools. The UAE study (Al-Zeini, 2008 ) findings indicate that there is a serious problem regarding classroom management in public high schools in the UAE. There is a need for teachers to build rapport between them and students as a means for a closer relationship that facilitates classroom management.

There is, however, a shortage of research studies that takes EFL classroom discipline in the Saudi context as their main topic. Most of the studies are on classroom discipline across all academic subjects. One such study is the one conducted by Al-Muhawwas (2015) which outlined the classroom difficulties encountered by all teachers, regardless of their academic specialties, in the elementary schools of Hail city. Corresponding with many previous studies (Sakui, 2007; Rahimi, 2012; Daihan, 1999), this Saudi study revealed that the high number of students inside the classroom was among the problems faced by teachers.

Daihan (1999) studied the most frequent problems encountered by Saudi first year primary teachers and found that class size was the most difficult problem hindering the effectiveness of teaching. There was no significant difference related to the experience and the type of qualification of teachers with regard to these problems.

With the absence of studies handling classroom discipline in a Saudi EFL context, this study comes to fill the gap and tries to examine the difficulties of classroom discipline for the sake of finding the best possible service new teachers of English need in Saudi public schools.

## **Statement of the Problem**

Teachers view their role at schools in one of three major ways: managerial, human relations, or political (Achinstein and Barrett, 2004). Teachers with managerial perspectives focus on order and classroom regulations that help maintain classroom discipline. Exposing problems of classroom discipline helps beginning EFL teachers solve classroom issues and achieve a well-managed classroom environment (Wong et al, 200). This study aims at investigating problems of classroom discipline as perceived by new EFL teachers in Saudi public schools. It tries to answer these three questions:

- 1) What are the problems of classroom discipline encountered by new EFL teachers in Saudi public schools?
- 2) How significant are these problems from the perspectives of EFL teachers?
- 3) Is there any relation between new EFL teachers' perception of these problems and their individual variables (gender, grade level, type of qualification)?

### **Methodology**

#### **Participants**

Eighty one new EFL teachers were randomly selected. They all were in their first year experience as teachers of English at Ministry of education's public schools in Saudi Arabia. The population of the study consists of 621 new EFL teachers who were offered a teaching job for the academic year 2015/2016. The sample included 61 male teachers (75%) and 20 female teachers (25%). The high number of male teachers in comparison with their female counterparts is attributed to the fact that Ministry of Education needed more male teachers for boys at that specific year. The ministry hired 455 male teachers in comparison with 165 female teachers. Out of the 81 teachers, there were 17 teachers (21%) working at primary schools, 28 teachers (34.6%) at junior high (intermediate) schools, and 36 high school (45%) teachers. The majority of teachers hold educational degrees (91.4% compared with 8.6%) majoring in

English language studies and an in-depth knowledge and understanding of methods of teaching, learning theories and educational psychology. This indicates also that Ministry of education is still hiring graduate teachers whose university education focus on the literary aspect of the language with total absence of the psychological and educational aspect of language learners. Table 1 shows the distribution of the sample according to the variables of the study.

**Table 1: Frequency distribution of variables**

Variable label	Value	frequency	%
Gender	male	61	75.3
	female	20	24.7
Grade level	Primary	17	21
	Junior high	28	34.6
	High	36	44.4
Qualification type	educational	74	91.4
	Non-educational	7	8.6

## **Instrument**

The main instrument of the study is a questionnaire developed by the researcher after reviewing the literature of classroom discipline. The questionnaire consists of two parts. The first part contains some information about the qualification type of the teacher and the educational grade he or she is teaching. The second part is on the discipline problems exhibited by students from the perspective of the EFL teacher who is teaching them. For the sake of clarity of the questionnaire, the researcher has used simple and short items to represent the problems teachers experienced in the classroom. Long discussion with EFL teachers about these items were made inside schools where the researcher, working as a supervisor, was teaching a practicum course at the University. Those teachers who did not participate provided the researcher with a feedback of the items of the

questionnaire and the type of discipline problems that might exist in their classrooms.

### Validity

Six faculty members of the department of curriculum and instruction, 2 educational supervisors of English at Ministry of Education, and three English teachers reviewed the items of the questionnaire and suggested some modifications that were considered by the researcher in the final version that contained 28 items.

Validity was established by correlating the items of the survey with the total score of the survey. Table 2 shows the validity value of each item.

**Table 2**  
**Correlation coefficients between the**  
**items of the survey with the total score of the survey**

N o.	The correlation coefficient	No.	The correlation coefficient	No.	The correlation coefficient	No.	The correlation coefficient
1	0.6524**	8	0.6493**	15	0.7307**	22	0.5470**
2	0.3249**	9	0.3095**	16	0.7261**	23	0.5648**
3	0.7559**	10	0.3142**	17	0.7538**	24	0.5096**
4	0.6101**	11	0.4847**	18	0.7851**	25	0.6264**
5	0.1654	12	0.7234**	19	0.8428**	26	0.5084**
6	0.6572**	13	0.6530**	20	0.8562**	27	0.6964**
7	0.5356**	14	0.3056**	21	0.7182**	28	0.6232**

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

### Reliability

Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated for the 28 items to determine the consistency and reliability of the instrument. It was found to be 0.93 indicating high internal consistency. Table 3 reveals this:

**Table 3**  
**Cronbach's Alpha for the Reliability of survey**

Variable	No. of Items	Alpha
All items of the survey	28	0.93

### Data Analysis

A current SPSS program was used to analyze data. For the questionnaire, all items were based on a four-item Likert scale (i.e. Big problem, Moderate problem, Small problem and No problem); the highest grade was given 4 marks and the lowest grade was given one degree. The range calculated for the scale was  $4-1 = 3$ ; and when dividing this by the number of categories (4), the result would be  $3/4 = 0.75$ , which was the length of each category of the four scales. Finally, the length of the category was added to the lowest grade of the scale, which was 1. Thus, the first category was calculated to be from 1 to 1.75. By adding the length of the highest limit for the category to produce the second category, and so on for the rest of the categories, the following criteria were defined for the purpose of analyzing the results:

**Table 4**  
**Range of mean for the categories**  
**Used in the instrument**

Description	Rang of mean
Big problem	3.26-4.00
Moderate problem	2.51-3.25
Small problem	1.76-2.50
No problem	1.00-1.75

Frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations, One Way Anova, and Mann-Whitney test were used when appropriate. Tables were used to display the discipline problems encountered by teachers and discuss the findings.

### Results and Discussion

Findings of the study can be discussed as follows:

- 1- Determining discipline problems encountered by Saudi EFL teachers and the degree of importance these problems represent for those teachers.
- 2- The significance of the three variables (gender, grade level, and qualification type) in teachers' perspectives of these problems.

### First: Classroom discipline problems

The main question of this study was " What are the problems of classroom discipline encountered by new EFL teachers in Saudi public schools?". Table 5 shows these problems listed in order according to their importance to EFL teachers.

**Table 5**  
**Discipline problems arranged according to their importance**

Ser No.	Statement		Big problem	Moderate problem	Small problem	No problem	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rank
22	Lying	Freq.	38	26	15	2	3.23	0.84	1
		%	46.9	32.1	18.5	2.5			
10	Copying homework from others	Freq.	41	20	13	7	3.17	1.00	2
		%	50.6	24.7	16.0	8.6			
5	Speaking in Arabic (Reluctant to speak in English)	Freq.	37	24	16	4	3.16	0.91	3
		%	45.7	29.6	19.8	4.9			
12	Ignoring Teacher's directions	Freq.	39	15	24	3	3.11	0.96	4
		%	48.1	18.5	29.6	3.7			
21	Cheating during English examination	Freq.	36	19	20	6	3.05	1.00	5
		%	44.4	23.5	24.7	7.4			
16	Damaging things/materials/others' property intentionally	Freq.	41	17	8	15	3.04	1.17	6
		%	50.6	21.0	9.9	18.5			
24	Forgetting English textbooks or notebooks or materials	Freq.	27	25	28	1	2.96	0.86	7
		%	33.3	30.9	34.6	1.2			
14	Talking and answering without raising hand or permission	Freq.	20	37	21	3	2.91	0.81	8
		%	24.7	45.7	25.9	3.7			
3	Sleeping during English classes	Freq.	31	18	25	7	2.90	1.02	9
		%	38.3	22.2	30.9	8.6			
6	Arguing back with the teacher or disrespecting	Freq.	33	15	23	10	2.88	1.09	10
		%	40.7	18.5	28.4	12.3			
4	Passivity and never interacting	Freq.	26	26	21	8	2.86	0.98	11
		%	32.1	32.1	25.9	9.9			
25	Distraction or inattentiveness	Freq.	19	34	25	3	2.85	0.82	12
		%	23.5	42.0	30.9	3.7			
1	Bullying, or threatening others	Freq.	27	23	22	9	2.84	1.02	13
		%	33.3	28.4	27.2	11.1			
7	Side discussions, laughing or talking with others	Freq.	20	34	19	8	2.81	0.92	14
		%	24.7	42.0	23.5	9.9			
19	Quarrelling or fighting with the teacher	Freq.	39	9	12	21	2.81	1.29	14
		%	48.1	11.1	14.8	25.9			

Ser No.	Statement		Big problem	Moderate problem	Small problem	No problem	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rank
13	Trying to gain attention or clowning around	Freq.	20	30	25	6	2.79	0.90	16
		%	24.7	37.0	30.9	7.4			
17	Moving out of seats without permission	Freq.	23	28	20	10	2.79	1.00	16
		%	28.4	34.6	24.7	12.3			
15	Shouting or banging doors or scrapping chairs	Freq.	23	27	18	13	2.74	1.05	18
		%	28.4	33.3	22.2	16.0			
11	Complaining against others	Freq.	11	44	17	9	2.70	0.84	19
		%	13.6	54.3	21.0	11.1			
28	Ridiculing the culture associated with learning English	Freq.	16	33	23	9	2.69	0.92	20
		%	19.8	40.7	28.4	11.1			
20	Ridiculing the teacher of English	Freq.	27	18	20	16	2.69	1.14	20
		%	33.3	22.2	24.7	19.8			
26	Late after prayer time or breaks	Freq.	21	25	22	13	2.67	1.04	22
		%	25.9	30.9	27.2	16.0			
18	Making non-verbal disruptive noise or gestures	Freq.	20	25	24	12	2.65	1.01	23
		%	24.7	30.9	29.6	14.8			
8	Exhibiting unaccepted manner or behavior (e.g. chewing gum)	Freq.	12	32	31	6	2.62	0.83	24
		%	14.8	39.5	38.3	7.4			
2	Busy with unrelated Non-English textbooks or assignments	Freq.	13	32	27	9	2.60	0.89	25
		%	16.0	39.5	33.3	11.1			
9	Asking irrelevant questions	Freq.	16	21	31	13	2.49	0.99	26
		%	19.8	25.9	38.3	16.0			
23	Discussing sensitive or controversial issues	Freq.	16	22	29	14	2.49	1.00	26
		%	19.8	27.2	35.8	17.3			
27	Using electronic devices or phones	Freq.	24	13	16	28	2.41	1.24	28
		%	29.6	16.0	19.8	34.6			
Mean* for total							2.82		

\* The mean is out of 4 marks

As for the result displayed on table 5, most of the discipline problems encountered by EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia fall under the moderate category with a total mean of 2.82 out of 4. However, there are six problems considered by EFL teachers as important with recorded means exceeding 3. They are as follows

- Lying
- Copying homework from others
- Speaking in Arabic
- Ignoring teachers' directions

(reluctant to speak English

- Cheating during English examinations
- Damaging things/others' property intentionally.

Fifty percent of correspondents believed that copying homework from others was a big problem they faced in the classroom, whereas 46.9 of EFL teachers considered lying an acute problem. Such findings suggest that EFL teachers need life skills programs in their schools to help students modify such behaviors corresponding with some Saudi studies (Al-Awadh, 2008) that called for such life skills courses students need to counter such negative behaviors.

The third most difficult discipline problem new EFL teachers face in Saudi classroom was speaking Arabic, students' native language, and their reluctance to speak in the target language. Such findings correspond with other previous Saudi studies (Al-Nufaie, 2010; Zaid, 1996; Al-Abdan, 1993) that reaffirmed students' as well as teachers' use of Arabic, the native language, in EFL classrooms. Speaking the native language in an English classroom is still seen as a controversial issue in foreign language learning. But new EFL teachers believe that it has become a problem that hinders effective learning of the language. Teachers should employ teaching methodologies that help use the target language and keep the native language to a minimum.

New teachers valued their classroom directions very highly. About 39 percent of them believed that such a problem is important as students do not observe classroom rules and teachers' instructions, thus leading to misbehavior and classroom discipline problems.

The fourth most important item that received a dangerously high percentage, considering the moral nature of the discipline problem, was cheating during English Examination. Such misbehavior not only affects learning the foreign language but also contradicts with the moral aspect of education in general. About 40 percent of new teachers agreed with statement 16 of the questionnaire believing it is a big problem that disrupts the classroom. There is a bad need for life

skill programs at schools to address such discipline problems and teach students to respect schools' property, others' and their own .

Although beginning teachers considered relations with students a moderate problem, the results of the study revealed an important aspect of discipline these teachers were facing in their classroom. Statement 6 (arguing back with the teacher or disrespecting), statement 19 (quarrelling or fighting with the teacher), and statement 1 (bullying or threatening others) scored 2.88, 2.82, and 2.84 respectively. Such a disturbing trend among students, which is a major concern for new teachers as proved by literature, corresponds with Attari (1996) and Macias & Sanches (2015). Ministry of Education should conduct preventive training programs for novice EFL teachers before the start of the academic year in order to provide these teachers with the necessary remedial procedures to follow when encountering such misbehaviors in the classroom. The prevalence of these problems leads to other difficulties in the classroom such as passivity (the score was 2.86), distraction (2.85), and sleeping (2.90) corresponding with previous studies like Ding and his colleagues (Ding et al., 2008).

There were other disturbing problems these teachers faced that could be attributed to the absence of regulations and classroom rules that govern the interactions and behaviors of students inside the classroom. "Talking without permission," "side discussion," "clowning around," and "moving out of seats without permission" were among the moderate discipline problems teachers experienced. Such findings indicate the need for new EFL teachers to establish classroom rules students must observe.

There were, however, problems that came at the bottom of the list like using electronic devices or phones. Such behavior is prevented by the school administration that disallows such devices. Among the least problematic discipline behaviors perceived by teachers were discussing sensitive issues, asking irrelevant questions, exhibiting unaccepted behavior, and being busy with non-English textbooks or assignments.

Two items of the questionnaire, statement 28 (ridiculing the culture) and statement 20 (ridiculing the teacher of English), scored the same

mean (2.69). Such attitudes may be attributed to the fear of an identity crisis students may suffer after an exposure to a foreign culture. Such findings correspond with other studies (Choudhary, 2013; Jabeen & Shah, 2011). Rivers (1981) believes that students who have a uniform culture often suffer from culture shock when faced with different ways of thinking, acting and reacting. Recent research, however, emphasizes the importance of culture in EFL. Tomalin (2008) considers culture to be the fifth language skill, in addition to speaking, writing, listening and reading. Such negative attitudes among students the study reveals against the culture of the target language create a barrier that hinders learning as language and culture are inseparable (Mitchell & Myles, 2004); students acquire them both together. There is a need for curriculum specialists in Saudi Arabia to address this issue by incorporating more items on the native culture in EFL textbooks that are currently prepared and authored by foreign companies in the west.

#### Second: The effect of dependent variables

The following table 6 shows Mann-Whitney scores to measure the effect of gender on EFL teachers' perception of classroom discipline they encounter inside their classrooms.

**Table 6**  
**Mann-Whitney test for the effect of Gender**

Gender	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	U-value	Sig.
Male	61	39.65	2418.50	527.50	0.366 (N. S.)
Female	20	45.13	902.50		

As displaced, the value of (U) is non-significant, indicating that there were no statistically significant differences between male and female EFL teachers in their views regarding the problems of discipline. Such findings correspond with Rahimi and his colleague (Rahimi & Assadollahi, 2012) where gender of the teacher was not important to determine the type of problems teachers are facing.

As for the effect of grade level on EFL teachers' perceptions of classroom discipline, table 7 shows the result:

**Table 7**  
**One Way Analysis of Variance (F-test), Grade level**

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1.08	2	0.54	1.54	0.221 (N. S.)
Within Groups	27.25	78	0.35		

As for the effect of the grade level, the value of (f) is non-significant, indicating that there were no statistically significant differences between teachers across grade levels of schools in their views regarding these problems.

Similarly, classroom discipline problems are not related with the type of qualification the teacher is having whether he is a graduate of an education or a literary program. Table 8 shows the result for the variable of qualification type.

**Table 8**  
**Mann-Whitney scores, Qualification type**

Qualification type	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	U-value	Sig.
Educational	74	41.72	3087.50	205.50	0.368 (N. S.)
Non-educational	7	33.36	233.50		

Here, the value of (U) is not significant, indicating that there were no statistically significant differences with regard to the qualification type of EFL teachers in their views of classroom discipline. The findings of this study comes in accordance with another Saudi study that gave no importance to this variable (Daihan, 1999).

## Recommendations

The main purpose of the present study is to determine classroom discipline problems as perceived by EFL teachers in Saudi public schools. The findings of the study indicate that students need life skills programs to address some of the discipline problems this study revealed like copying homework from others, cheating, lying, and disrespecting the EFL teacher.

There is a need also for holding an awareness preventive training programs for new EFL teachers to address some persisting issues these teachers need like the best possible procedure to respond to the various discipline problems exhibited by students in the classroom. It is advisable to conduct such programs before the start of the new academic year. Issues like using the native language in teaching English and introducing the culture of the target language are best discussed in such programs with experts in the field of EFL teaching and learning, as well as inviting experienced teachers to share their views on these problems with novice teachers.

The results of the study showed that there were no significant differences between new EFL teachers' perceptions of discipline problems that could be attributed to gender, grade level and qualification type. All participants viewed discipline problems with the same perspective regardless of the variable these teachers represent.

Further research studies in EFL might address the issue of introducing the culture of the target language and the difficulties of teaching such an inseparable aspect of the language to Saudi students. The idea of importing EFL textbooks, prepared by foreign companies without giving a chance to local experts or teachers to take part in the process of authoring and developing their own curricula, contradicts with the literature on education which gives more emphasis to the local element in developing any curriculum ( Bruner, 1996).

Finally, the role of educational supervisor is crucial in helping new teachers who need support, assistance and guidance during their first year experience as EFL teachers. If there is no enough time for professional development through training programs, then it is the

responsibility of educational supervisors who visit schools regularly to provide new teachers with the guidance they need to prevent discipline problems before they arise in the classroom. The preventive measure is the best strategy these new teachers should employ to avoid disruptive behaviors in the classroom.

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### Appendix: Questionnaire on Classroom Discipline

#### General Instruction

I am conducting a research into new EFL teachers' perceptions of classroom discipline problems . I would be grateful if you could take ten minutes or so to complete this questionnaire, anonymously. The information you provide will be used for research purposes. The questionnaire consists of two parts. The first part contains some information about your qualification and the educational grade you are teaching. The second part is on the discipline problems exhibited by students from the perspective of the EFL teacher. You are asked to rate the importance of discipline problems of students using a 4-point likert scale as follows: big problem =3, moderate problem=2, small problem=1, no problem=0.

Thank you for accepting to participate.

Part A. Please check your answer with  $\surd$ .

Grade level: Elementary  Intermediate  High school

Gender: Male  Female

Qualification type: Educational  Non-educational

Part B. Rate each of the following with  $\sqrt{\quad}$  in the space provided.

		big problem	moderate problem	small problem	No problem
1	Bullying, or threatening others				
2	Busy with unrelated Non-English textbooks or assignments				
3	Sleeping during English classes				
4	Passivity and never interacting				
5	Speaking in Arabic (Reluctant to speak in English)				
6	Arguing back with the teacher or disrespecting				
7	Side discussions, laughing or talking with others				
8	Exhibiting unaccepted manner or behavior (e.g. chewing gum)				
9	Asking irrelevant questions				
10	Copying homework from others				
11	Complaining against others				
12	Ignoring Teacher's directions				
13	Trying to gain attention or clowning around				
14	Talking and answering without raising hand or permission				
15	Shouting or banging doors or scrapping chairs				
16	Damaging things/materials/others' property intentionally				
17	Moving out of seats without permission				
18	Making non-verbal disruptive noise or gestures				
19	Quarrelling or fighting with the teacher				
20	Ridiculing the teacher of English				
21	Cheating during English examination				
22	Lying				
23	Discussing sensitive or controversial issues				
24	Forgetting English textbooks or notebooks or materials				
25	Distraction or inattentiveness				
26	Late after prayer time or breaks				
27	Using electronic devices or phones				
28	Ridiculing the culture associated with learning English				