| **RESEARCH ARTICLE**

The Impact of Self-discipline on Classroom Management in Casablanca-Settat Middle/ High Schools

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| **ABSTRACT**

This paper examined the effect of self-discipline on classroom management in Casablanca-Settat private and public high/middle schools. The major purpose was to see the extent to which self-discipline is taught in these schools, to find out if Moroccan middle/high school teachers have received any training concerning the subject matter, and explore the importance of the latter in relation to classroom management. The single most important instrument used to conduct this study was an online questionnaire. A sample of 100 Moroccan EFL teachers participated in this survey. The findings revealed that self-discipline is not taught in Moroccan middle/high schools, and the results also showed that teachers did not receive any training with regard to self-discipline. The results further indicated that most teachers stressed the significance of self-discipline in enhancing classroom management. Various ways of how to implement self-discipline in the classroom are also discussed in this paper.

| **KEYWORDS**

Classroom management; disruptive behavior; EFL context; self-discipline; and teacher training.

1. Introduction

Many scholars, philosophers, and political figures believe that education is key to development. In order to achieve excellent educational goals, the following are needed: basic infrastructure, qualified human resources, interested learners, and self-discipline, among other pre-requisites. In principle, this paper addresses self-discipline since it is a major element in the learning process. Students' disruptive behaviors impede positive outcomes, although there are enough equipment and material. Research has shown that self-discipline enhances students' critical thinking, problem-solving skills, productivity, and excellence (Doyle, 1990). That is, self-discipline helps students improve their social and moral solving skills, such as listening to the perspective of the other, yielding alternative solutions, measuring the results, identifying the source of the problem, and making the right decision. Classroom management has been a major issue for most teachers, and so this paper is concerned with providing some handy tips to help teachers well manage the classroom. Given that classroom management involves different techniques, procedures, rules, principles, code of conduct, etc. to foster students' learning and repress their misbehaviors, a number of researchers have asserted that self-discipline is one of the best components that teachers need to resort to, so as to obtain a safe learning atmosphere where students can take part in the lesson objectives.

This paper aims to see the extent to which self-discipline is taught in Casablanca-Settat middle/high schools, find out if Moroccan middle/high school teachers have received any training concerning self-discipline, explore the importance of self-discipline in relation to classroom management, and provide different ways these teachers use to implement self-discipline in the classroom. In order to meet the objectives above, this study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1- To what extent is self-discipline taught in Casablanca-Settat middle/high schools?
2- Did Moroccan middle and high school teachers receive any training about self-discipline?
3- How can teachers implement self-discipline in their classrooms?

2. Literature Review

This review addresses the issue of self-discipline and its effect on classroom management. Self-discipline is essentially linked to disruptive behaviour. The latter has been traditionally seen as a characteristic of the student, deriving from teachers' deficiency in classroom management (see Bear, 1998; Cameron, 1998). Interventions dealing with disruptive behaviour have focused on behaviourist strategies, such as reinforcing the wanted behaviour through praise and rewards or eliminating the unwanted behaviour through the use of reductive systems, namely ignoring, seclusion time, etc. (Canter & Canter, 1992; Martens & Meller, 1990; Ringer, Doerr, Hollenshead, & Wills, 1993). Other programs have lately emphasized the use of self-management training (see Anderson & Prawat, 1983; Hoff & DuPaul, 1998). However, psychologists and educators have come to realize the limitations of the behaviourist approaches to coping with misbehaviour in the classroom (see Doyle, 1990). A preventive approach—one that takes a holistic perspective on the school environment and teaching practices— has been recently the concern of most educators and psychologists (Bear, 1998; Brophy, 1996; Freiberg, 1999; Butcher & McEwan, 1998). Disruptive behaviour is considered one of the most serious hurdles in the learning/teaching process at most Moroccan middle/high schools. It is reported that students in Moroccan public high schools feel insecure because of a lack of efficient disciplinary measures. Besides that, the majority of teachers lack decent training to manage classroom discipline, and they constantly complain about behavioural issues relative to classroom management (Mabeba & Prinsloo, 2000). It is often reported that large classes lead to some serious cases of disruptive behaviours, in which the teacher may write a report on the misconduct of a student, call for a disciplinary council to have a close look at the case, and take the appropriate disciplinary measures against that student. The thing is that the frequency and the category of students' misconduct differ throughout the school year. In this respect, disruptive behaviour can be divided into three main variables: time, participants, and means (Lewis, 2009). The nature of misbehaviour differs in danger according to the stages of the lesson. The participants involved in disruptive behaviour also affect the flow of the lesson and the degree of the disruption. The means, which can be verbal noise, material noise, and violent acts, further intensify the nature and degree of disruption. There are generally three criteria a teacher can use to identify disruptive behaviour in the classroom, namely determining noise level, appointing a guard, and avoiding opportunities for misbehaviour (Crawford & Beaman, 2007). In principle, trouble makers sit together (birds of the same feather flock together), so it is important for the teacher to 'divide and rule' in the sense that he or she has to separate those who misbehave and don't allow them to sit together (Kounin, 1977).

It is believed that age is a fundamental factor that explains students' disruptive behaviours. High school students are, in principle, teenagers, and thus they are more likely to react negatively to any incident in the classroom. At this stage, students urge to grandstand in the classroom, in the street, among friends, family, etc. Hence, any psychological or biological deficiency leads, to a large extent, to disruptive behaviour (Smith & Smith, 2006). In addition, classroom management involves different variables ranging from how teachers physically arrange the classroom, to teaching 'styles', to classroom energy (Brown, 1998). In essence, classroom management consists of more specific factors that teachers should know to sharpen their skills. These variables would encompass classroom environment, managing misbehaviour, rewards and punishments, variety of activities, giving instructions, group and pair work, time management, voice projection, lesson planning, and students' engagement, among others. In this regard, classroom management and discipline remain two prominent components of teaching. Both the teacher and students have to agree upon certain clear-cut regulations that they must observe throughout the school year, and students need to be aware of the consequences of breaching these rules. These patterns are abiding, and therefore the teacher has to be consistent in enforcing them all the time.

Various researchers investigated the issue of self-discipline and its major effect on classroom management in general and students' knowledge and learning in particular (see Gong et al. (2009); Maxwell, 1987; James et al. (2014). They found that self-discipline has a major effect on students' higher academic achievements. Self-discipline, a socially and morally responsible behaviour, is not only driven by the anticipation of external rewards or fear of punishment but also by intrinsic factors, such as motivation, confidence, perseverance, etc. (Bear, 2008). Research has revealed that self-discipline promotes a positive school environment, enhances students' academic achievement, and improves self-esteem, self-worth, and well-being. Gong et al. (2009) advanced that self-discipline—a key area in psychology and sociology— contributes to students' academic performance in the sense that a large scale of psychological studies has shown an optimistic relation of self-discipline with performance. Schools are basic settings in which learning and teaching take place. In order to establish a safe learning environment, students first need to understand what they should and should not do. That is, they should be introduced to the code of conduct so that they know the rules, boundaries, and norms of the classroom. It is the job of the teacher to supplement materials so that they meet students' levels and interests. Teachers need to involve students in the learning process so that they can pay attention in class and keep up with the pace of their teacher. Hence, the aims and objectives of the teacher, school staff, and, ultimately, education can be attained when learning takes place. This indicates that achieving these objectives depend, to a large extent, on the setting and the environment where learning

is taking place. Nevertheless, students' misconduct is a leading factor in failure in their courses. Learning is unlikely to take place in a classroom where disruptive students do whatever they like. Students are to be made aware that their misbehaviour has a negative effect on their performance in exams, and thus teachers should encourage students to monitor and regulate their self-discipline. In short, this section has shed light on the theoretical background on which the present paper is based.

3. Methodology
This part describes the methodology used to accomplish the objectives of the present study, and thus information relative to the participants, the instruments, and the procedure is presented in detail.

3.1 Research Design
The current study uses a quantitative research design to examine the research questions and hypotheses. This being the case, the data analysis will be carried out by both descriptive and inferential statistics. This design helps in finding out how the independent variable of the study interacts with the dependent variable. That is, it shows to what extent the issue of self-discipline has an effect on classroom management.

3.2 Sampling
The number of participants in this paper is 100 Moroccan EFL middle and high school teachers (N= 100) working in the public and private sectors in the Casablanca-Settat region. Before administering the questionnaire, the expected sample was only teachers from the public sector. However, we decided to extend our study to the private sector too. The first group of participants is high school teachers (70%) who teach common core, 1st-year bac, and 2nd-year bac classes. However, the second group of participants (30%) are middle school teachers. An online questionnaire was shared with the teachers via mass media, including WhatsApp, Facebook, and E-mails.

The choice of English teachers rather than teachers from other fields can be justified on the ground of controlling the confounding variables. It can also be explained by teachers' familiarity with the English pedagogy (for practices and implications). To get to know more about how the profile of a participant is built, extra variables are used in the demographic section of the questionnaire, such as age, gender, general teaching experience, class level, etc.

3.3 The instruments
3.3.1 Questionnaire procedure
The single most important instrument used in this study is an online questionnaire. The questionnaire was created using Google forms and administered online through different social media, mainly Facebook, WhatsApp, and emails. We could not distribute hard copies to teachers for different reasons, one of which was time constraints. We were running out of time while collecting the data, and thus we couldn't visit middle and high schools. We only shared the online questionnaire with teachers we know in person. We did not randomly share this questionnaire on Facebook, for instance, to avoid any confounding variables. Hence, we made sure only teachers whom we knew would fill in this questionnaire. And even though it does not include a lot of participants, we believe this sample (N=100) is somehow representative.

The questionnaire is basically divided into two sections. The former is concerned with the demographic data of the participants, such as their age, gender, levels taught, and years of teaching experience. The latter, however, consists of five questions. The first question sheds light on whether the participant is a middle or high school teacher. The second question examines if the participants had any training in self-discipline before. The third question is an attempt to see if teachers teach self-discipline in their classes. The fourth question seeks to see if the instruction of self-discipline is mandatory for better classroom management. The last question is concerned with the implementation of self-discipline in Moroccan EFL private and public middle/high schools.

3.4 Data collection procedure
The data collection started at the end of October and was finished in the middle of November. All informants are Moroccan EFL middle and high school teachers working in the Casablanca-Settat region in Morocco. The informants were sent the questionnaire online through mass media, mainly Facebook, WhatsApp, Telegram, and E-mails. We made sure that only English middle and high school teachers would participate, by asking the participants to send us their valid emails, so that we could contact them for further information if needed. In addition, we did not share the questionnaire on Facebook groups, the case in which other participants would take part in the study. We sent the online questionnaire to teachers we know in person. That's why the sample is somehow small, but we believe it is representative to the best of our knowledge.

3.5 Coding the data and statistical procedures
It is believed that "*the hardest part of any statistical work is getting started. And one of the hardest things about getting started is choosing the right kind of statistical analysis. The choice depends on the nature of your data and on the particular question you are trying to answer.*" (Crawley, 2007, p. 323). First of all, after the correction and scoring of the questionnaire, the data were analysed

using Google forms. Depending on the research questions and objectives, the researcher used Google forms to conduct descriptive statistics and SPSS to conduct inferential statistics.

4. Results and Discussion
4.1 General frequencies & descriptive statistics

Table 1. Demographic Data of Participants

Demographic	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Female	44	44
Male	56	56
Class Level		
Middle School	30	30
High School	70	70
General Teaching Experience		
1-3 years	71	71
4-6 years	20	20
7-9 years	09	09
+10 years	00	00

As the name infers, a variable is something that varies. A research variable is an entity that reflects different attitudes and values, such as age, gender, education, experience, and others. These are of value in the sense that they reveal the factors that can determine what attitudes people have on the basis of each one. The independent variables this paper tackles are mainly three: gender, class level, and general teaching experience.

A- Gender
Descriptively speaking, Table 3 shows that the vast majority of participants are males (56%), whereas the minority are females (44%).

B- Class Level
As for the classroom they are currently teaching, we found that 70% are high school teachers, while only 30% are middle school teachers. The mean class level of respondents was (1.30), and the standard deviation was (Sd=.461) (see Table4).

C- Teaching Experience
Table 3 demonstrates that the number of years of experience for this research sample ranges from 1 year to more than 10 years. More than half of the participants (71%) have between 1 to 3 years of experience teaching in public schools. However, 20% of the participants have experience of 4 to 6 years, 9% of the participants have experience of 7 to 9 years, and ultimately 0% of the subjects have experience of more than 10 years of teaching experience in Moroccan public middle/high schools. The average teaching experience was 1.38 (Sd= .648).

D- Training
The questions about training addressed in the questionnaire are the following:

- Have you had any form of self-discipline training when you were a teacher trainee?
- Have you ever tried to implement self-discipline in your lesson plan for better classroom management?

The first question concerns itself with whether teachers had received any form of self-discipline training when they were teacher trainees. The concept of training is not an easy term. It is a dynamic process that includes the pre, while, and the post-stage. It does not cease as the teacher begins their teaching career, but rather it goes on as experience develops. Teachers' answers to this question show, as was hypothesized, that they didn't receive any form of self-discipline training when they were teacher trainees. Furthermore, their answers indicate that they are neither encouraged by their administrators to attend conferences/workshops nor provided with training programs to implement self-discipline in their lesson plans. The latter is the concern of the second question, to which most, if not all, teachers responded negatively. That is, most teachers had never tried to implement self-discipline in their lesson plans for better classroom management.

The table below shows that most teachers (66%) said that they lack enough training to teach their students' self-discipline, and the same teachers (68%) said that they do not include self-discipline in their lesson plans. Hence, they do not have the corresponding knowledge and skills to implement self-discipline in their lesson plans for better classroom management, the outcome of which is students' productivity and excellence. The average training was 1.66 (Sd= .476).

Table 2: Descriptive statistics of the training variable

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	34	34.0	34.0	34.0
	NO	66	66.0	66.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	
Valid	Yes	32	32.0	32.0	32.0
	NO	68	68.0	68.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

E- Teachers' practices and implementation of self-discipline
The last question is an open-ended question: *What do you think middle/high school teachers should do to implement self-discipline in the classroom?* It is concerned with Moroccan high/middle teachers' practices and implementations of self-discipline in their classes. Concerning effective practices of self-discipline, the teachers suggested the following:

Table 3: Practices Variable

Strategies	Frequency	Percentage
Group work	9	18.2
Establish code of conduct	11	22.7
Collaborative Activities	6	9.1
Games	4	4.5
Modelling	4	4.5
Asking questions	4	4.5
Oral Instruction	4	4.5
Practice	4	4.5
Training	4	4.5
Workshop	4	4.5
Extra-curricular activities	4	4.5
Reinforcing good behavior	4	4.5
Integrate values within lesson plan	4	4.5
Raise Awareness	4	4.5

Table 4: Summary Statistics of Key Variables

	Mean	Stand Dev
Class Level	1.30	.461
Years of experience	1.38	.648
Training	1.66	.476
Lesson Plan	1.68	.469

4.2 Data analysis & testing of the hypotheses
In this section, we will try to build on the descriptive statistics of each of the independent variables of the study that we presented in the previous section (e.g., gender, class level, teaching experience, training, practical implementations) to test the hypotheses

that we postulated in the general introduction. It is worth mentioning that we will attempt to answer each of the research questions independently.

- Research Question 1: *To what extent is self-discipline taught in Moroccan middle/high schools?*
Many studies addressed the issue of self-discipline, measuring the extent to which self-discipline is taught in schools. The results revealed that only a few schools focused on teaching their pupils how to regulate, monitor, and control their behaviour (Smith & Smith, 2006). The findings of this study were in line with previous research, in the sense that most participants said they did not teach self-discipline in the classroom. These results are in conformity with the null hypothesis we stated at the beginning—*self-discipline is not taught in Casablanca-Settat high/middle schools*. Hence, the first hypothesis in this paper is confirmed.

- Research Question 2: *Did Moroccan middle and high school teachers receive any training about self-discipline?*
A large body of research tackled the issue of self-discipline in relation to training, and the majority of published articles reported that teachers complained about a lack of training to cope with self-discipline in the classroom (Crawford & Beaman, 2007). In the same vein, the results of the questionnaire showed that Moroccan middle/high schools did not receive any training concerning self-discipline and its effect on classroom management in general. In other words, teachers are not well trained to teach students self-discipline. This is consistent with the existing research that teachers are ready to implement self-discipline in their lesson plans, but there are a lot of challenges that impede the implementation of self-discipline. This is due to a lack of training, lack of administrative support, and large classes. These findings are to confirm the null hypothesis we stated at the beginning— *Moroccan middle and high school teachers didn't receive any training about self-discipline*.

- Research 3: *How can teachers implement self-discipline in their classrooms?*
A large number of studies investigated the issue of self-discipline and reported practical implications for teachers to use and adopt in their classrooms (e.g., Hoff & DePaul, 1998; Kaplan et al., 2002). Likewise, our participants also suggested different ways which teachers can use to implement self-discipline in their classes. Some of these would include establishing a solid code of conduct with students, group work, raising awareness, and reinforcing good behaviour, among others. These findings offer an affirmative answer to our alternative hypothesis—*there are different ways teachers can use to implement self-discipline in their classes*.

In brief, this part has shed light on both the presentation and analysis of the data collected for this research. It has also tested the research hypotheses and discussed the obtained data in light of previous research conducted to examine the same issue—self-discipline.

5. Conclusion
This paper examined the effect of self-discipline on classroom management in Casablanca-Settat high/middle schools. The findings revealed that self-discipline is not taught in Moroccan middle/high schools, and this was crystal clear in the answers given by the participants. The latter also said that they had not received any training on self-discipline before. This would suggest that a lack of training and knowledge of how to implement the issue in question prevents teachers from teaching self-discipline. The results of this study further demonstrated that most teachers do not implement self-discipline in their lesson plans, and thus they resort to other strategies and techniques to manage the classroom. The participants further provided different practical ways that teachers can employ to implement self-discipline in the classroom (see Section 4.1). These results would suggest the following implications.

5.1 Pedagogical implications
Based on our findings, we suggest that teachers invest class time in raising students' awareness of self-discipline. They can do this by teaching them self-discipline and by making them understand the importance of self-discipline in their studies, and encouraging them to regulate their own behaviour. We also suggest that teachers should model how students can monitor and regulate their self-discipline. At the same time, they have to explain the reasons behind the classroom code of conduct, inform students of any violations of classroom rules, and praise good behaviour.

We further suggest that teachers would better diversify their methodology of teaching. Instead of focusing on the same procedure, teachers should organise workshops, study days, extra-curricular activities, etc., to sensitize students to the significance of self-discipline and its effect on their academic achievement and excellence. Since education goes beyond teaching, educators should insert values, principles, and morals into the curriculum. Hence, we should teach students values, such as respect, discipline, integrity, etc., show them their mistakes, make them apologize, and help them overcome their issues.

5.2 Limitations
A significant limitation concerns the study's small sample size. During the administration of the questionnaire, we were in service as well, so we could not visit as many middle/high schools as possible. This made the process of data collection very limited and resulted in only 100 copies, which made the generalization of the findings limited as well.

5.3 Suggestions for further research

First, it is recommended to expand the sample size to enable the analysis according to various participants' subgroups, such as parents, administrators, and researchers. Second, this study is confined to the effect of self-discipline on classroom management. A further interesting research topic would be—investigating the effect of self-discipline on students' character. In this case, researchers would conduct a qualitative study in which they observe and interview students and compare their behaviour prior to and after instruction.

Finally, one of the main constructs in this paper is teachers' experience/ training. Due to the limited number of teachers with such an experience, the researcher skipped both classroom observation and the use of checklists. The possibility of developing other instruments to approach teachers' attitudes regarding self-discipline may provide interesting additions to this field.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest. The funders had no role in the design of the study, in the collection, analyses, or interpretation of data, in the writing of the manuscript, or in the decision to publish the results.
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