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## The role of teachers' classroom discipline in their teaching effectiveness and students' language learning motivation and achievement: A path method

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### ABSTRACT

This study investigated the role of EFL teachers' classroom discipline strategies in their teaching effectiveness and their students' motivation and achievement in learning English as a foreign language. 1408 junior high-school students expressed their perceptions of the strategies their English teachers used (punishment, recognition/reward, discussion, involvement, and aggression) to discipline the classroom. The students evaluated their teachers' teaching effectiveness by completing effective Iranian EFL teacher questionnaire (Moafian, & Pishghadam, 2009). They also filled in Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (GhorbanDordinejad & ImamJomeh, 2011) that assessed their motivation towards learning English as a foreign language. Achievement in English was established based on formal grades students received at the end of the academic year. The results showed that EFL teachers reward and praise students for good behavior and they are not very authoritarian. Further, teaching effectiveness, motivation and achievement in learning English were all found to be related to discipline strategies. The results of path analysis showed that those teachers who used involvement and recognition strategies more frequently were perceived to be more effective teachers; however, students perceived teachers who used punitive strategies as being less effective in their teaching. It was also revealed that in classes where teachers managed disruptive behaviors by using punitive strategies, students had problems in learning as punitive strategies lowered students' motivation. Teaching effectiveness was found to mediate the effect of punishment on motivation while motivation mediated the effect of punitive strategies on achievement. Motivation was found to have the strongest effect on achievement.

**Keywords:** achievement; classroom discipline; motivation; teaching effectiveness; teachers

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## Introduction

The prevalence of problematic and disruptive student behavior in schools of almost all parts of the world has called attention to extensive research on finding the sources of such behavior and developing foundations to educate teachers who can effectively manage their classes through adopting appropriate discipline strategies.

The significance of classroom discipline and management has been appreciated both from a social practice perspective and an effective teaching stand. Socially, teachers' discipline strategies have been suggested to be a potent force to promote students' sense of responsibility in the classroom (Lewis, Romi, Qui, & Katz, 2005) and to produce more responsible citizens at a grand vision (Lewis, 2001). Effective teaching research also shows that a sufficient degree of classroom discipline is needed to create an atmosphere conducive to student learning as students' misbehavior distracts the process of learning and teaching and ruins the effectiveness of even the most carefully planned lessons (Barton, Coley & Wenglingsky, 1998).

Teachers' behavior and management styles attach a special significance to this issue as the intervention techniques teachers choose to manage their classes are perceived to be the sign of their professional adequacy by students (McCormick & Shi, 1999) and an important motivator of learning (Muller, Katz, & Dance, 1999). A non-threatening learning environment develops a sense of belonging among students (Freeman, Anderman, & Jensen, 2007), makes them self-initiated and self-confident (Rogers, 1983), and thus increases their desire for learning. Conversely, if teachers act coercively by adopting punitive discipline strategies, learning is negatively affected (Banfield, Richmond, & McCroskey, 2006) and more psychological and somatic complaints are heard in the classroom (Sava, 2002). This issue complicates teacher role in the classroom and makes dealing with persistent behavior problems a formidable challenge that is one source of teacher job stress and burnout (Lewis, 1999).

Classroom management particularly raises key issues in EFL classes and is one of the biggest challenges language teachers face while they teach (Linse & Nunan, 2005). On the one hand, a language teacher tries to be a kind and loving caregiver to let the genuine communication happen in the classroom (Williams & Burden, 1997). On the other hand, in order for the instruction to take place, the teacher should maintain order to manage language activities most effectively. It is not, therefore, easy for a language teacher to create the balance between these two, that is, a caring environment and a controlled one.

Further, teachers and their caring behavior are considered to be among the most important environmental factors that can help learners to develop positive attitudes towards language learning and promote students' effort or engagement in doing language learning tasks (Williams & Burden, 1997). As a result, second language motivation research places a heavy emphasis on teachers' role in motivating language learners (Dörnyei, 1994) and minimizing the level of their demotivation (Gorham & Christophel, 1992).

However, it is still unknown if language teachers' discipline strategies have any effect on their teaching effectiveness (as perceived by students) and their students' motivation and achievement in learning a foreign language. The aim of the present study is thus threefold. First, the strategies teachers use to discipline students' misbehavior in English as a foreign language classes are investigated. Second, the relationship between these strategies and teachers' teaching effectiveness, and students' learning motivation and achievement is sought. Finally, the inter-relationships would be modeled using a series of paths and statistically tested to find the predictors of motivation and achievement.

## Review of Related Literature

### *Classroom discipline*

The term 'discipline' comes from the word 'discipulus' in Latin which means teaching and learning. The term has the essence of control in it and means "to teach someone to obey rules and control their behavior or to punish someone in order to keep order and control" (Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, 2005, p. 443); and thus it is mostly connoted with punishment in case of disobedience. Punitive strategies such as detention are used in schools based on "the premise that isolation gives the perpetrator time to reflect on what happened, realize the error of his or her ways, and return to the same situation but with a change of behavior and attitude" (Pane, 2010, p. 88).

Recent research on the issue of discipline strategies, however, has revealed that punitive strategies appear to be of limited usefulness in promoting responsible student behavior (Lewis, 2001) and should be replaced by proactive and interactive discipline practices (Pane, 2010). In this framework, discipline is viewed to be associated with the act of teaching students self-control based on a contract that binds a teacher and a group of students together so that learning can be more effective (Harmer, 1983). Thus, emphasis is put on student self-regulation by negotiating, discussing, and contracting between teachers and students (Vitto, 2003) to let the group take responsibility for ensuring the appropriateness of the behavior of all its members (Johnson & Johnson, 2006).

Effective classroom management is obviously linked to teachers' ability to set an appropriate tone and gain learner respect and cooperation in class (Williams & Burden, 1997). As observable instructional behavior of teachers in the classroom is indicative of their teaching effectiveness (Kyriakides, Creemers, & Antoniou, 2009), the way teachers discipline their classes has a profound impact on the way they project themselves as effective teachers. It is evident that more caring teachers choose relationship-based discipline strategies (e.g., discussing with students about their misbehavior) over coercive ones (e.g., aggression and punishment) in an attempt to prevent discipline problems (Noddings, 2007). A few studies support the fact that more caring teachers and those who use relationship-based discipline strategies are perceived to be more effective teachers by their students (e.g., Teven & McCroskey, 1997).

When teachers involve students in decision makings or recognize their good behavior, they act more responsibly in class (Lewis, 2001), show more positive affect to their teachers, and express a greater belief that the intervention was necessary (Lewis, Romi, Katz, & Qui, 2008). Students prefer teachers who enact caring attitudes, establish community and family type environment, and make learning fun (Howard, 2001). This is rooted in the fact that caring teachers show more empathy towards their students and see a situation from their point of view and feel how they feel about it. They also understand their students' personal feelings and needs, are attentive to students, listen to what they say, and react to their needs or problems quickly (McCroskey, 1992).

Teachers' appropriate discipline strategies also help students to learn better as class discipline protects students from disruption and thus emotional and cognitive threat (Lewis, 2001). Research shows that teacher management styles maximize students' academic performance and keep them on task (Altinel, 2006), engage students in learning (Everston & Weinstein, 2006), and influence their motivation and achievement (Freiberg, Stein, & Huang, 1995). In this cycle, "the more that students perceive their teacher cares about them, the more the students will care about the class, and the more likely they will be to pay attention in class and consequently learn more course material" (Teven & McCroskey, 1997, p. 167).

As the concern about discipline issues in education is growing year by year (Altinel, 2006), more empirical studies are carried out to probe into this issue in different contexts.

In a pioneering empirical study on investigating classroom discipline, Lewis (2001) examined the role of classroom discipline in promoting student responsibility for learning and safety rights in the classroom in Australia. The results showed that teachers' coercive discipline is perceived by students to be one key factor that inhibits the development of responsibility in students and distracts them from their schoolwork.

In another study, Lewis et al. (2005) did a cross-cultural comparison of discipline strategies teachers of different nationalities use. They reported that Chinese teachers use less punitive strategies in their classes in comparison to their Australian colleagues as Chinese students normally listen to their teachers and misbehavior does not happen very often in their classes. Some differences between male and female teachers in adopting classroom discipline strategies were also found, as male teachers were found to be less likely to use coercive strategies to discipline their classes.

In a follow up study, Lewis et al. (2008) investigated the extent to which students of different nationalities perceive their teachers' discipline strategies to be key players in forming their attitudes towards the teacher and the schoolwork. Regardless of their nationality, all students perceived punitive discipline strategies to be related to distraction from schoolwork and shaping their feeling towards their teachers. The use of recognition of responsible behavior strategy and discussing it with the students were also found to be related to less distraction of schoolwork.

Tartwijk, Brok, Veldman and Wubbels (2009) identified shared practical knowledge about classroom management strategies of teachers who were successful in creating a positive atmosphere in Dutch multicultural classes. The teachers were found to be aware of the importance of providing clear rules and correcting student misbehavior whenever necessary, while they intended to reduce potential negative influences of corrections on the classroom atmosphere. They aimed at developing a positive rapport with students and adjusted their teaching methods to students' anticipated responses.

Nie and Lau (2009) examined how two classroom management practices, care and behavioral control, were related to students' engagement, misbehavior, and satisfaction with school in Singapore. Results of the study showed that both care and behavioral control were positively related to student engagement. Behavioral control was found to be a hindrance to classroom misbehavior while care was a facilitator of students' satisfaction with school.

Maini (2011) evaluated the impact of a teacher training program in classroom management with the aim of preventing off-task and disruptive student behavior in the classroom in Canada. The result revealed significant increase in teachers' confidence to manage student misbehavior and uses of rewards as an intervention strategy. It was also found that student inattention and overactivity decreased significantly while on-task non-disruptive behavior and self-reliance were increased.

In another study, Jeloudar and Yunus (2011) found that Malaysian teachers' discipline strategies and their social intelligence were significantly related. The results showed that teachers' social intelligence was inversely related to punitive strategies and positively related to discussion, recognition, involvement, and hinting strategies.

Elbla (2012) investigated the issue of corporal and verbal punishment as means of disciplining students' behavior in schools of Sudan. The findings revealed that teachers use punitive strategies as a result of the stress and frustration they themselves experience at school due to the fact that the school environment is poor and lacking facilities; however, they are aware of the fact that

punishment has negative impact on their students' behavior and personality. Students disapproved their teachers' punitive strategies and reported that "they have developed sense and feelings of fear, frustration, aggression, low self-esteem, low confidence and lacked motivation for learning as result of the continuous punishment" (p. 1656).

Mitchell and Bradshaw (2013) investigated the relationship between exclusionary discipline strategies and the use of positive behavior supports with student ratings of school climate (i.e., fairness, order and discipline, student-teacher relationship, and academic motivation) among American students. The results showed that the use of exclusionary discipline strategies was inversely related to order and discipline in the class, while greater use of classroom-based positive behavior supports was related to higher order and discipline, fairness, and student-teacher relationship.

Although studies in mainstream education have underscored the importance of management and discipline dimensions in the description of good teachers and their role in encouraging learning (e.g., Riley, Lewis, & Brew, 2011), this issue is still open to research in language education (Kang, 2013).

#### *Classroom discipline and language classes*

English classes are composed of various communicative activities that require students' active participation, so "students usually have more opportunities in an EFL class than classes of other subjects to speak, to talk, to read loud or even to argue with each other" (Yi, 2006, p. 132). These activities encourage noise, initiative, and disorder (Tomlinson, 1988) and therefore, if the class is managed inappropriately by the teacher, there is the risk of chaos and disruptive behavior. Too much noise in the classroom intervenes with cognitive processing of information and minimizes learning outcome and motivation. Many students associate the noise produced by group work with a lack of classroom management skill on teacher's side and this raises doubt about the value of language learning activity and/or teacher's ability to manage and direct learning and thus some students may fail to participate in class activities (Butler, 2011).

Another aspect of classroom management centers on the issue of how to teach under 'adverse circumstances' that may be linked to a number of management concerns such as teaching large classes, teaching multiple language proficiency levels in the same class, compromising with the institution, and cheating (Brown, 2001). As a result of that, a wide range of negative class participation instances including disruptive talking, inaudible response, sleeping in class, failure to complete homework, and unwillingness to speak in the target language may happen in language classes (Wadden & McGovern, 1991). Negative class participation "appears to contradict the prevalent notion of the EFL/ESL teacher as a beneficent 'facilitator' who guides highly-motivated students on the road to language fluency" (Wadden & McGovern, 1991, p. 126). Hence, grappling with classroom management becomes one of the key elements of interactive language teaching (Brown, 2001).

Disciplining English classes in the Asian context seems to be a more problematic issue. Teachers do not welcome oral pair or group work as they increase the risk of noise and indiscipline in the classroom that is not acceptable within the structure of secondary schooling (Carless, 2007). They believe that traditional methods such as PPP (Presentation, Practice, Production) enable them "to maintain control over lesson content, textbook coverage and classroom discipline" (Carless, 2009, p. 61) and they are not willing to shift to methods that create classroom management and discipline problems. Thus, the belief in the importance of discipline seems to discourage the implementation

of communicative activities in which the teacher is required to release some control (Carless, 2003). This makes EFL teachers be more interventionist and controlling in their classroom management orientations (Rahimi & Asadollahi, 2012a) although they still use a variety of activities in language classes (Rahimi & Asadollahi, 2012b).

Meanwhile, EFL curriculum change in many Asian countries has urged EFL teachers to adopt more learner-centered approaches (Kang, 2013) to language teaching in spite of teachers' negative attitudes towards them (Adams & Newton, 2009). Adopting the new approach without educating teachers about their role in managing learner-centered classes may lead to implementing inappropriate discipline strategies that creates a double burden for teachers. While they are interested in involving pupils actively in lessons, instructors find it difficult to retain appropriate discipline due to noise and interruptions generated by certain oral or group tasks (Carless, 2002). Tension arises when facilitative teacher role in managing communicative activities goes against prevailing cultural norms that demand an authoritative and controlling teacher (Carless, 2004). This causes contradictory management behavior that may lead to confusion among students and negatively affect their learning (Ormrod, as cited in Kang, 2013).

Following trends of research in general education, a few EFL researchers have also paid attention to the issue of misbehavior in language classes and how language teachers may handle those disruptive behaviors.

Altinel (2006) investigated Turkish EFL teachers and their students' perceptions of misbehaviors, causes of misbehaviors, and types of misbehaviors among high-school students as well as the strategies the teachers used to discipline the class. The result revealed that teachers and students did not have the same views towards misbehaviors and their causes. It was also reported that the discipline strategies teachers used most frequently were verbal strategies, such as verbal warning, threatening, and communicating with parents; and nonverbal strategies such as using eye contacting and ignoring misbehavior.

In another study in Turkey, Kizildag (2007) carried out a longitudinal study to understand how EFL student teachers develop into novice teachers in terms of employing discipline strategies and overcoming disruptive behavior. The participants were observed from university practicum courses to becoming first year teachers in the profession. The findings revealed that student teachers employed a small number of strategies to deal with misbehaviors but when they started teaching in real classes as full-time teachers, they enlarged the use of different types of strategies to discipline the class.

Kang (2013) examined Korean elementary school EFL teachers' language use (target, native) for disciplinary purposes. The results show that the teachers whose EFL proficiency level was high relied significantly more on the target language to discipline disruptive behavior, while the low proficiency level teachers depended significantly more on their first language to implement discipline strategies in language classes.

Khodarahmi & Motallebi Nia (2014) investigated the relationship between EFL learners' perception of their teachers' classroom discipline strategies and their willingness to communicate in English inside the classroom. The results showed that students' willingness to communicate in the English class was significantly related to their perception of the discipline strategies their teachers used. It was also found that teachers' discipline strategies could predict around 38% of the variance in EFL learners' willingness to communicate in the English class.

In a very recent study, Zhou and Li (2015) focused on cultural differences in handling classroom behavior by teachers and reported Chinese language teachers' experiences and perceptions of their

classroom management in the United States. The results revealed that Chinese teachers experienced cultural mismatches between their cultural expectations and American students' classroom behavior. They also had some problems in understanding the demands of American classroom management, implementing effective strategies for managing the classes, and using language appropriately.

### *Teachers' behavior and language learning motivation*

Over the past few decades, there has been a surge of interest in exploring factors affecting language learning motivation to understand why learners are motivated to learn a target language (Ellis, 2008). In this framework, the significant role of teachers in language classes and the ways they can motivate students to learn a target language have been acknowledged both theoretically and empirically by language experts.

In earlier models of motivation, teacher role was defined in relation to situational factors that help students to develop positive attitudes towards learning a foreign language (Gardner & Lambert, 1972). Later, the key contribution from cognitive and constructive views led to the evolution of teacher role in motivation theories and more emphasis was put on the importance of teacher behavior in promoting language learning motivation. Thus, teacher-student interaction pattern, teacher's teaching style and the way he/she controls and manages the class have been considered among the factors that can affect students' motivation (Dörnyei, 1994). Moreover, interpersonal teacher behaviors such as the nature and amount of feedback, rewards, praise, punishment and sanctions are considered key factors that influence creating and maintaining a positive and warm classroom atmosphere conducive to learning (Williams & Burden, 1997). The considerable amount of attention being paid to the role of motivation in teaching and learning a foreign language paved the way for the proposition of the motivational teaching practice (Dörnyei, 2001a) based on which teachers consciously apply instructional interventions to elicit and stimulate student motivation (Guilloteaux, 2007).

Second language motivation research is characterized by two interrelated issues of how EFL teachers' instructional behavior and attitudes motivate or demotivate language learners.

First, it is empirically evident that teachers' behavior, classroom activities they use, and the teaching methods they adopt can be sources of motivation for language learners (Oxford, 1998). Teachers can promote motivation in language learners by considering the affect of the learner, specifically the protection from loss of self-confidence and the development of adaptive self-regulatory skills (Falout, Elwood, & Hood, 2009). Students who perceive their language teachers as controlling (e.g., using threats or imposing goals and deadlines) are less intrinsically motivated (Noels, Clément, & Pelletier 1999). Similarly, it is reported that problems rooted in affect such as motivation and anxiety originate from the affective climate that teachers create in the classroom as well as from the way students manage or regulate their own affective states (Kuhl, 2000). It has also been found that the language teachers' motivational practice is directly linked to increased levels of learners' motivated learning behavior and their motivational state (Guilloteaux, 2007) and results in better learning outcomes (Chesebro & McCrosky, 2002).

Second, one string of research on L2 motivation has focused on internal and external factors that impact demotivation or "specific external forces that reduce or diminish the motivational basis of a behavioral intention or an ongoing action" (Dörnyei, 2001b, p. 143). The findings suggest that teachers act as a primary source of demotivation and students generally attribute their lack of motivation to teacher-related factors such as inappropriate or negative teacher behaviors (Arai,

2004; Zhang, 2007). Research shows that teachers' personalities, commitments, competence, teaching methods and styles, explanation, attitudes, language proficiency, pattern of correction, and the pace of teaching cause foreign/second language learners to lose their motivation to study the target language (Dörnyei, 2001b; Falout & Maruyama, 2004; Sakai & Kikuchi, 2009).

Empirical studies on the issue of teachers' role in motivating language learners have mostly focused on demotivating factors rather than motivating factors. Falout and Maruyama (2004), for instance, compared demotivating factors to learn English among low and high proficiency language learners. They reported that higher proficiency learners attributed demotivation to external factors, especially teachers, while lower proficiency learners attributed their demotivation to internal factors, particularly failure in performance.

Falout (2006) investigated the factors that demotivated Japanese language learners. It was found that the teachers play a key role in this regard, and the personality and pedagogy of teachers were significantly related to learners' perceptions of the course, the subject, and their abilities to learn a foreign language.

Piggot (2008) investigated Japanese students' perceptions of the motivating and demotivating classroom factors in learning English as a foreign language. The results of the study showed that teachers' modelling (teacher's persona), presentation (the way the teacher communicates the purpose and procedure of class activities), affiliative motive (the extent to which students are motivated to please the teacher), and control (teacher-pressure) were among the important issues to motivate/demotivate students to learn English as a foreign language.

Falout et al, (2009) investigated the demotivating factors in learning English as a foreign language in Japan; and the relationship between EFL learners' past demotivating experiences and present proficiencies. The findings showed that Course Level (the appropriate level of the textbooks/courses, and pace of the courses) and Teacher Immediacy (perceptions and experiences with past teachers, as being approachable or friendly) were positively related, implying that "the more learners perceive teachers as approachable, the more they perceive the level of the courses as appropriate" (p. 408).

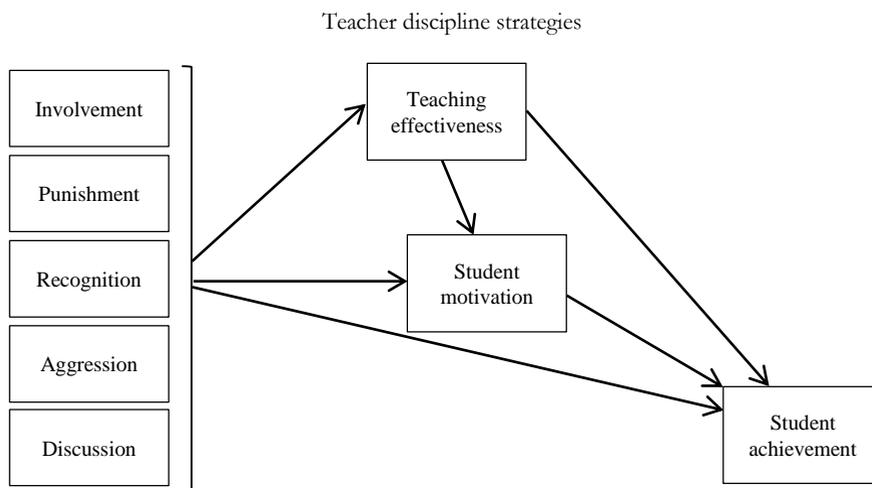
Sakai and Kikuchi (2009) investigated demotivation among Japanese learners of English. Five demotivation factors extracted from their study. Teachers' competence and teaching style (teachers' explanation, respect to students, aggressive behavior, and pace of teaching) were found to be among the most important factors that demotivated students to learn English as a foreign language.

Rahimi and Sadighpour (2011) investigated Iranian technical and vocational students' demotivating factors in learning English as a foreign language. The participants reported that teachers and their teaching quality were among the factors that demotivate them to learn English as a school subject. However, they rated teacher-related factor as the fourth demotivating factor while assessment policy, school facility and instructional materials were considered to be more important.

Despite recent advances in research and theorization in teachers' teaching effectiveness and disciplining strategies, there is a dearth of research to link management practices in classroom settings to students' language learning motivation and achievement.

*The present study*

This study thus hypothesizes that classroom discipline strategies have a direct effect on EFL teachers' teaching effectiveness and students' motivation and achievement in learning English. Teaching effectiveness has a direct impact on motivation and achievement; and motivation has a direct effect on achievement (Fig. 1).



**Figure 1.** Hypothesized causal relationship between variables of the study

Further, teachers' teaching effectiveness is hypothesized to mediate the effect of discipline strategies on motivation. That is, the way teachers discipline their classes impacts how well they teach and this impacts students' motivation.

Teachers' teaching effectiveness and students' motivation are also hypothesized to mediate the effect of teachers' discipline strategies on achievement. That is, in addition to their direct influence on achievement, teachers' choice of discipline strategies is hypothesized to indirectly influence achievement through its influence on teachers' teaching effectiveness and students' motivation. In other words, the way teachers discipline their classes impacts their teaching effectiveness and this, in turn, influences students' learning achievement. In the same way, how teachers discipline their classes influences students' learning motivation and this, in turn, influences students' achievement.

It is also hypothesized that teaching effectiveness mediates the effect of discipline strategies on motivation. That is, those teachers who use appropriate discipline strategies can heighten students' language learning motivation.

Finally, motivation has been hypothesized to mediate the influence of teaching effectiveness on students' achievement. That is, how well teachers teach in the class impacts students' motivation and this, in turn, impacts students' achievement.

Based on this theoretical framework, the current study tried to answer the following questions:

- (1) Are teachers' discipline strategies related to their teaching effectiveness and their students' motivation/achievement in learning English as a foreign language?
- (2) How do teachers' discipline strategies influence their teaching effectiveness and their students' motivation/achievement in learning English as a foreign language?

## **Method**

### ***Participants***

The population of the study included all grade one and two junior high-school students of District 1 of Sari, a city located in the north of Iran. One thousand and four-hundred eight students were selected based on cluster random sampling from 35 private and public schools of district 1 of the city that included 19 girls' schools (12 public, 7 private) and 16 boys' schools (10 public, and 6 private). The list of all schools was taken from the educational office and 26 of them were randomly selected to be included in the study. From each school one grade 1 class and one grade 2 class were selected randomly and included in the study (52 classes, altogether).

### ***The instruments***

To gather the required data the following instruments were used:

- Classroom discipline strategies questionnaire
- Effective EFL teacher questionnaire
- Attitude/Motivation Test Battery
- Official reports of English scores

#### *Classroom discipline strategies questionnaire*

To measure teachers' classroom discipline strategies, the 24-item questionnaire of classroom discipline (Lewis, 2001) was used. The scale measures six discipline strategies including punishment, recognition/reward, discussion, involvement, hinting, and aggression.

In order to assess teachers' discipline strategies, students were asked to indicate 'how frequently the teacher acted as described in the statement when trying to deal with misbehavior' on a 6-point Likert type scale. The response alternatives provided were Nearly always (6), Most of the time (5), A lot of the time (4), Some of the time (3), Hardly ever (2) and Never (1).

To investigate factor structure of the Persian version of the questionnaire, a principal components analysis (PCA) with varimax rotation was used with a sample of 428 students. PCA was used because it has been suggested that it is a psychometrically sound technique and it is mathematically simpler than factor analysis (Stevens, 1996). As there were at least 10 cases for each variable and the number of participants exceeded 150, it was assumed that the number of sample was suitable

for PCA (Nunnally, 1978). The Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin value was .88, exceeding the recommended value of .6 (Tabachnik & Fidell, 2007) and Bartlett's test of Sphericity reached statistical significance (Approx. Chi-Square = 3824.157,  $df = 276$ ,  $sig = .000$ ), supporting the factorability of the correlation matrix. Principal components analysis revealed the presence of five components with eigenvalues exceeding 1.0 that explained a total of 57.13% of the variance (Appendix 1).

It should be noted that item loadings of three factors (punishment, aggression, and recognition/reward) were exactly like the original questionnaire. However, all items of 'hinting and involvement' (8 items) and one item from 'discussion' loaded under just one factor that was called 'involvement'. The discussion factor had three items loading on it. The reliability coefficient of the questionnaire in this study was estimated to be .81.

#### *Effective EFL teacher questionnaire*

To assess EFL teachers' teaching effectiveness through students' evaluation, a 47-item questionnaire on characteristics of effective EFL teachers as perceived by their students, developed and validated by Moafian and Pishghadam (2009), was utilized. Each item is anchored on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The 12 factors included in the scale are: accountability (7 items), interpersonal relationships (7 items), attention to all (5 items), examination (3 items), commitment (3 items), learning boosters (6 items), creating a sense of competence (4 items), teaching boosters (4 items), physical and emotional acceptance (2 items), empathy (2 items), class attendance (2 items) and dynamism (2 items). The developers investigated factor structure of the scale using Principal Axis Factoring (PAF) with varimax rotation. The result approved a 12-factor model that explained 48% of the variance of the construct. They reported a reliability coefficient of .94 for the questionnaire. The reliability coefficient of the questionnaire in this study was estimated to be .97.

#### *Attitude/Motivation Test Battery*

To obtain measures of students' motivation, the Persian version of Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (Gardner & Smythe, 1975) was used. The respondents were asked to rate themselves regarding each item of the questionnaire on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from completely disagree (1) to completely agree (4).

The Persian version of the questionnaire has been validated by GhorbanDordinejad and ImamJomeh (2011) using exploratory factor analysis with varimax rotation. The result showed that 70 items of the scale loaded under seven factors that explained more than 51% of the variance of the construct. The factors included attitudes towards learning a foreign language (20 items), language learning anxiety (16 items), parents' attitudes (8 items), attitudes to language teacher (10 items) demotivation in learning a language (5 items), attitudes to native speakers (5 items), and tendency to learn a foreign language (6 items). The reliability of the questionnaire has been reported to be .85. The reliability coefficient of the questionnaire in this study was estimated to be .88.

*Achievement in English*

School achievement in English was established based on formal grades students received in English at the end of the academic year 2010-2011 through oral performance and written tests. The scores were received from the district's office of education upon official request.

**Results***Descriptive statistics*

Table 1 summarizes means and standard deviations of all variables of the study including classroom discipline strategies, teaching effectiveness, students' motivation, and students' achievement.

Table 1  
*Descriptive Statistics of All Variables of the Study*

Variables	Mean	SD
Classroom discipline	3.40	.748
Involvement	3.83	1.40
Punishment	2.72	1.25
Recognition/reward	4.29	1.41
Aggression	2.48	1.38
Discussion	3.04	1.22
Teaching effectiveness	3.97	.872
Motivation	3.14	.509
Achievement	15.55	3.98

As Table 1 shows, the average score of discipline strategies is 3.40, while each item was measured by a 6-Likert scale, implying that EFL teachers frequently use classroom discipline strategies to manage their classes. Further, they prefer to use recognition/reward strategies (mean=4.28) most of the time while they tend to avoid aggression (mean=2.48) and punishment (mean=2.72) strategies in the classroom.

The mean of teaching effectiveness is 3.97. As each item was measured by a 5-Likert scale it is implied that EFL teachers are satisfactorily successful in their work from their students' perspective.

The average score of motivation in learning English is 3.14. Considering that fact that each item was measured by a 4-Likert scale, it is inferred that participants of this study were roughly motivated to learn English as a foreign language. Further, the average score of achievement in learning English is 15.55. The minimum and maximum scores of English achievement tests are zero and 20, respectively; showing that most participants were medium achievers of English as a school subject.

*Inter-correlation among variables*

Table 2 presents inter-correlation among variables. As Table 2 illustrates, teachers' classroom discipline strategies are significantly and positively related to teaching effectiveness and students' motivation and achievement in learning English.

Table 2  
*Inter-correlations among Variables (n=1408)*

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1 Classroom discipline strategies	1	.790**	.433**	.533**	.376**	.674**	.148**	.052*	-.126**
2 Involvement		1	-.012	.477**	-.074**	.448**	.353**	.196**	.038
3 Punishment			1	-.159**	.524**	.219**	-.257**	-.223**	-.225**
4 Recognition/reward				1	-.223**	.315**	.345**	.192**	.026
5 Aggression					1	.157**	-.396**	-.234**	-.253**
6 Discussion						1	.132**	.060*	-.078**
7 Teaching effectiveness							1	.432**	.163**
8 Motivation								1	.351**
9 Achievement									1

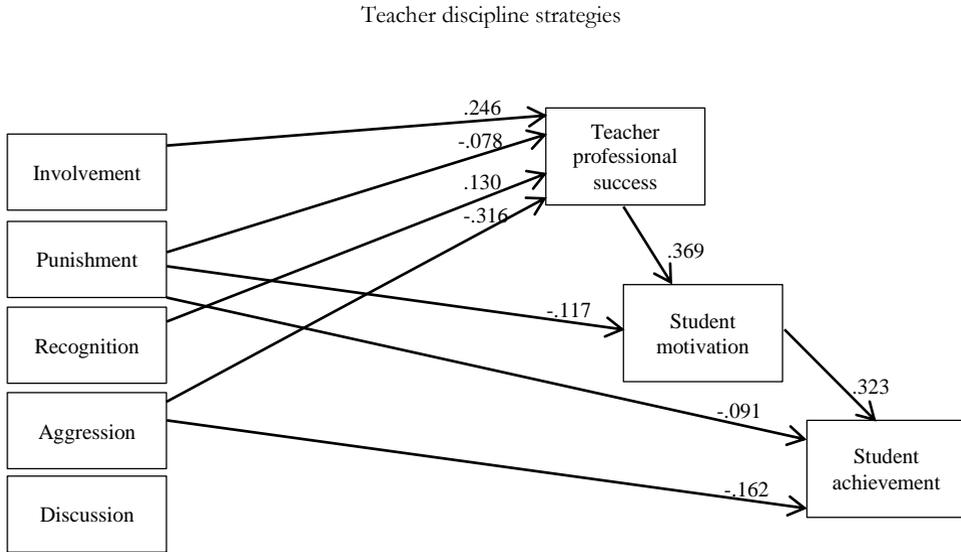
\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05

Correlations of five types of discipline strategies with other variables of the study were also considered. Teaching effectiveness was found to be significantly and positively related to involvement, recognition, and discussion while it was inversely related to both punishment and aggression strategies. Motivation was also found to be positively related to involvement, recognition, and discussion while it was negatively related to punishment and aggression strategies. Achievement was found to be inversely related to punishment, discussion, and aggression strategies. Further, teaching effectiveness was found to be positively related to both motivation and achievement. Motivation and achievement were also found to be positively related.

*The path model*

As shown in Figure 1, the relationship between the variables of the study was modeled using a series of path models. Estimates of model parameters were obtained using AMOS 18. The tested model is shown in Figure 2.



**Figure 2.** The tested model of the study

Table 3 illustrates the fit indices of the hypothesized model including chi square ( $\chi^2$ ), root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), comparative fit index (CFI), the goodness-of-fit index (GFI), adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI), and incremental fit index (IFI); and their acceptable fit indices (Schermelel-Engel & Moosbrugger, 2003). As Table 3 shows, the statistics indicate a good fit of the measurement model to the data.

Table 3

*Fit Indices of the Tested Model*

Fit measure	Good fit	Model value
$\chi^2/df$	$0 \leq \chi^2/df \leq 2$	1.775
RMSEA	$0 \leq RMSEA \leq .05$	.023
CFI	$.97 \leq CFI \leq 1.00$	1.000
GFI	$.95 \leq GFI \leq 1.00$	1.000
AGFI	$.90 \leq AGFI \leq 1.00$	.989
NFI	$.95 \leq NFI \leq 1.00$	.999

For each variable the magnitude, direction, and significance of direct and indirect effects were also calculated (Table 4).

Table 4  
Standardized Direct, Indirect, and Total Effects of the Tested Model

Predictor	Criterion	Direct effect	Indirect effect	Total effect
Involvement	Teaching effectiveness	.246**	---	.246**
Punishment		-.078*	---	-.078*
Recognition		.130**	---	.130**
Aggression		-.316**	---	-.316**
Punishment	Student motivation	-.117**	-0.029*	-.145**
Involvement		.051	.090	.141
Recognition		.014	.047	.061
Aggression		-.022	-.117*	-.139
Effectiveness		.369**	---	.369**
Punishment	Achievement	-.091*	.044*	-.135*
Recognition		-.080	.014	-.066
Involvement		.014	.036	.050
Aggression		-.162**	-.032*	-.194**
Motivation		.323**	---	.323**
Effective ness		-.042	.119	.077

According to the conceptual model, classroom discipline strategies were hypothesized to have direct effects on teaching effectiveness, motivation, and achievement.

As Table 4 shows, four discipline strategies were found to have direct effects on teaching effectiveness. Involvement and recognition strategies had significant positive direct effects on teaching effectiveness ( $B=.246, p<.01$ ;  $B=.130, p<.01$ , respectively), indicating that teachers who use these strategies were perceived to be more successful by students. However, punishment and aggression strategies were found to have significant negative direct effects on teaching effectiveness ( $B=-.078, p<.05$ ;  $B=-.316, p<.01$ , respectively), implying that applying these strategies makes teachers be less effective from students' perspective.

From among discipline strategies, only punishment was found to have a negative direct effect on motivation ( $B=-.117, p<.01$ ), indicating that punishment of misbehaviors in the classroom demotivates students to learn English.

Further, punishment and aggression were found to have a significant negative direct effect on achievement ( $B=-.091, p<.01$  and  $B=-.162, p<.01$ , respectively), indicating that those teachers who use punishment and aggression strategies to discipline their classes end up with less learning outcome.

Contrary to the conceptual model, teaching effectiveness had no direct effect on students' achievement, while it was found to have a direct effect on students' motivation, implying that good teachers are sources of motivation for their students' learning ( $B=.369, p<.01$ ).

Finally, motivation had a direct significant effect on students' achievement ( $B=.323, p<.01$ ), indicating that more motivated students are higher achievers in English classes.

Further, indirect and total effects in the model were investigated. Punishment has an indirect effect on student achievement that has been mediated by motivation ( $B = -.044, p < .05$ ). This suggests that using punishment strategies demotivates students to learn English as a foreign language and this, in turn, influences their achievement. The total effect of punishment on achievement is negative and significant ( $B = -.135, p < .01$ ). Similarly, aggression has an indirect effect on achievement that has been mediated by motivation ( $B = -.032, p < .05$ ), implying that using aggression demotivates students and this, in turn, influences their achievement. The total effect of aggression on achievement is negative and significant ( $B = -.194, p < .01$ ).

It was also hypothesized that teachers' effectiveness mediates the influence of classroom discipline strategies on students' achievement. Contrary to the conceptual model, no strategy was found to significantly influence achievement through teaching effectiveness.

It was also hypothesized that teaching effectiveness mediates the effect of discipline strategies on motivation. Only punishment was found to have an indirect negative effect on motivation that is mediated by teaching effectiveness ( $B = -.029, p < .05$ ), implying that those teachers who use punishment are perceived to be less successful teachers and this lowers students' motivation. The total effect of punishment on motivation is negative and significant ( $B = -.145, p < .01$ ).

Finally, motivation has been hypothesized to mediate the impact of teaching effectiveness on students' achievement. Contrary to the conceptual model, teaching effectiveness did not have a significant indirect effect on achievement through motivation.

A comparison of the standardized parameter estimates for the total effect of teaching effectiveness, discipline strategies, and motivation shows that motivation is still the strongest predictor of achievement ( $B = .323$ ). Following that, aggression and punishment strategies are predictors of achievement with a negative effect ( $B = -.194$ ;  $B = -.135$ , respectively).

The strongest predictor of teaching effectiveness was found to be aggression ( $B = -.316$ ), followed by involvement ( $B = .246$ ), recognition ( $B = .130$ ), and punishment ( $B = -.078$ ). The predictors of students' motivation were also teaching effectiveness ( $B = .369$ ) and punishment ( $B = -.145$ ).

### *Synopsis of findings*

- Those teachers who use involvement and recognition strategies are perceived to be more effective teachers.
- Those teachers who use aggression and punishment strategies are not perceived to be effective teachers.
- In classes where punishment and aggression strategies are used by the teachers to manage misbehavior or disruptive behaviors, students have problems in learning.
- Punishment is one reason for low language learning motivation among students.
- Teaching effectiveness is a source of motivation for learning English as a foreign language.
- Punitive strategies lower students' learning because they lower their motivation.

- Punishment lowers students' motivation because it decreases teachers' teaching effectiveness.
- Those students who are more motivated learn English better.

## Discussion

The results of the study primarily showed that EFL teachers generally use productive discipline strategies such as recognition/reward, involvement and discussion more than counterproductive strategies like aggression and punishment. This implies that EFL teachers are perceived to be non-authoritarian, praise students for good behavior and involve them in the process of discipline decision making.

The finding corroborates a few studies on EFL teachers' classroom management strategies revealing that while EFL teachers are interventionist in instructional management and people management, they are interactionist in behavior management (Rahimi & Asadollahi, 2012a). Thus, while they are more controlling in structuring daily routines, managing classroom learning tasks, and monitoring their relationship with students, in setting classroom rules and establishing a reward structure they are more liberal and less controlling. A caring language teacher is the one who makes the ground ready for language tasks that need genuine interaction, communication and cooperation among students. Therefore, EFL teachers' "classroom management is not only a means to effective instruction; it also becomes a vehicle for providing students with a sense of community and with increased skills in interpersonal communication" (Jones, 1996, p. 504). This finding, however, contradicts the notion that Asian language teachers adopt authoritarian and reactive discipline strategies to control their classes (e.g., Carless, 2007).

EFL teachers' effectiveness of teaching was assessed by their students to be roughly satisfactory. This finding supports other studies that found language teachers to be satisfactorily effective in the EFL context in spite of the fact that EFL curriculum may suffer from serious problems including teaching materials and methodology (Rahimi, & Nabilou, 2011). One reason for this finding might be EFL teachers' teaching style as they have been found to use a variety of teaching activities in their classes which may satisfy and motivate students with different learning styles to learn English. It is reported that EFL teachers prefer to use sensing type activities that rely primarily upon the mental process of sensing and attend to observable facts or happenings through one or more of the five senses (Cooper, 2001). In this way, they stress the importance of using the teaching material that is applicable for students outside of the classroom walls and deal with life issues, provide concrete experiences first in any learning sequence, and always include a practical reason for an assignment.

Further, EFL learners were found to be roughly motivated to learn English as a foreign language. Considering the problems reported in the literature with respect to EFL curricula, this finding is promising. Some studies have shown that this motivation is related to EFL learners' positive attitudes to English language and the usefulness of learning English as the language of science and technology (Albirini, 2006). However, many factors have been found to demotivate language learners at schools, the most important of which is inadequate facilities such as computers, visual aids, and language labs for teaching English (Meshkat & Hasani, 2012).

Achievement in learning English as a school subject was also found to be at an average level. Although language learners are motivated to learn English as a foreign language, the school context cannot fulfill their desire due to certain factors such as student-related factors (e.g., multiple

proficiency classes), school-related factors (e.g., large classes, lack of technology tools, libraries, and labs), teaching material-related factors (e.g., level of difficulty, high load of information), and EFL curriculum planning- related factors (e.g., limited hours of instruction) (Rahimi & Nabilou, 2011).

Further analysis of the relationship among variables of the study showed that those teachers who used involvement and recognition strategies were perceived to be more effective teachers by their students. Moreover, those teachers who used aggression and punishment strategies were not found to be successful teachers in the eyes of their students. It shows that students prefer more caring teachers and those who are more supportive of students' voices when it comes to disciplining the classes. "Caring teachers purposely listen to students, critically reflect, provide spaces for students' voices and agency in the classroom to prevent discipline problems" (Noddings, as cited in Pane, 2010, p. 91) and avoid using coercive strategies. It is evident in the literature that the ability to manage students effectively is a critical component of teachers' sense of professional identity (Lewis, et al., 2008). It is also evident that classroom discipline is a well-documented source of teacher stress (Lewis, 2001) that may result in low self-concept that eventually impacts the image teachers project in the classroom as an effective teacher.

It was also found that students had problems in learning English as a school subject in classes of those teachers who used coercive strategies. Research on classroom management shows that effective management promotes cooperation among students, reduces discipline problems, and engages students in learning (Pane, 2010), and has a great influence on students' academic achievement, even more than intelligence (Gettinger & Kohler, 2006). If the teacher cannot provide an environment in which teacher and students actively participate, some students will be segregated, bored, or show misbehavior (Pane, 2010). This results in failure in academic achievement for the isolated student(s) and disrupting the process of learning for the rest of the class. In this poorly managed classroom, teachers struggle to teach and students usually learn less than they should, and there is abundance of discipline issues while a well-managed classroom provides an environment in which teaching and learning can flourish (Brown, 1990). Hence, effective classroom behavior management is an essential prerequisite for effective classroom learning. In this sense, if the teacher is prevented from teaching or pupils are prevented from getting on with their academic work as a result of their own inappropriate or disruptive classroom behavior, or that of others, then clearly little learning of value can take place (Whedall & Merrett, 1992). Similarly, teachers' use of appropriate discipline strategies will promote students' responsibility and encourage them to "exercise their own learning rights and protect the learning and physical and emotional safety rights of other" (Lewis, 2001, p. 308). On the other hand, teachers who use coercive strategies want to protect themselves and establish order in the classroom that will result in students' lower learning outcome (Lewsi, 2001).

Moreover, it was also revealed that authoritarian teachers demotivated students to learn English as a foreign language and this low motivation was a reason for lower learning outcome. When students perceive their teachers as misbehaving, the main outcome is a lack of general motivation (Gorham & Christophel, 1992), negative attitudes towards the subject matter (Henderson, Fisher, & Fraser, 2000) or learning (Lewis, et al., 2008), and considerable amount of stress (Pierkarski, 2000). If appropriate discipline strategies that match communicative activities are not used in language classes, communicative approaches will have little impact in language classes of public schools (Tomlinson, 1988) and cannot generate enthusiasm among students to pursue language learning.

Further, punitive strategies were found to affect teaching effectiveness and this was a reason for students' low learning motivation. Research shows that teachers' behavior produces positive attitudes towards language learning and students prefer teachers who manage their classes well (Pane, 2010). Hence, maintenance of a positive classroom climate is essential in promoting teaching and learning effectiveness. Retaining control in the classroom, mutual relationship with students, and creating a relaxed and enjoyable atmosphere in the classroom are among elements of good

teachers that have links to classroom management (Witcher, Onwuegbuzie, & Minor, 2001). This highlights the role of teachers' discipline strategies in successfully managing language tasks and distinguishing between noise and disorder that foreshadow disciplinary problems; and noise that indicates high levels of involvement (Tsui, 2003). Successful "teachers must skillfully manage group and pair work to make activities well-structured and motivating rather than a noisy time for some and a time to opt out for others" (Cameron, as cited in Carless, 2004, p. 643).

As expected, motivation was the strongest predictor of achievement in learning English. This, once again, supports the findings of second language motivation research and the key role affective factors play in learning a foreign language (Dörnyei, 2001b).

### **Limitations and Suggestions for Further research**

One obvious limitation of the current study is that students of one metropolitan area in Iran took part in it. This implies that there is a need for further research to probe into students' varied conceptualization of disciplinary practices with respect to their socio-economic and geographical differences. Therefore, replication of the study by considering other contexts such as rural settings may lead to more revealing results with regard to the variables of this study and their relationships.

Another limitation of the study is that only one source of data gathering, i.e., students, was utilized. Also, the data were gathered based on participants' self-report and no qualitative data analysis techniques were used to observe what was really happening in the classes. As a result, multiple sources of data such as parents, colleagues and school principals and qualitative data gathering procedures (e.g., observation and interviews) can be included in further studies. In this regard, exploring prevalent types of misbehavior EFL teachers encounter in their classes and how EFL teachers handle those misbehaviors would be of equal importance.

Moreover, the study focused on the relationship between one teacher variable, that is, teacher efficiency, with classroom discipline strategies. This necessitates further research concerning teachers' demographics such as their age, gender, and teaching experience which affect the way they construct their teaching behaviors and interactions with their students. Moreover, teachers' personal characteristics such as self-efficacy, teaching style, and job burn-out which may result in classroom discipline problems will be worth investigating.

Also, no variable was manipulated and no treatment was given in the current study to scrutinize changes of teachers' behavior and their effect on students' perceptions and attitudes towards those behaviors. Experimental designs would reveal more about the reasons behind students' misbehavior in language classes and the ways these misbehaviors can be managed and eradicated.

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### Appendix 1. Summary of items and factor loadings from factor analysis for classroom discipline strategies questionnaire

Items	Factor loadings				
	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Involvement</b>					
1. Lets students know that the way they are behaving is not how the class expects them to.	.538				
2. Discusses students' behavior with them to allow them to figure out a better way to behave in future.	.760				
3. Lets students talk about their side of things so that it can be clearly understood.	.629				
4. Gets students to understand why their behavior is a problem for others by discussing it with them.	.764				
5. Gets students to change the way they behave by helping them understand how their behavior affects others.	.779				
6. Describes what students are doing wrong, and expect them to stop.	.735				
7. Asks students questions like "What are you doing?" to get them to think about how to behave better.	.445				
8. Reminds misbehaving students about the class rules.	.452				
9. Describes how students are misbehaving to make them decide whether to stop or not	.484				
<b>Punishment</b>					
10. Gives out consequences to students who misbehave (e.g. move their seats, detention).	.731				
11. Increases the level of consequence if students will not do as they are told (e.g. move seats, detention).	.768				
12. Increases the level of consequence if a misbehaving student argues.	.806				
13. Increases the level of consequence if a misbehaving student stops when told, but then does it again.	.728				
<b>Recognition/reward</b>					
14. Rewards individual students who behave properly.	.760				
15. Praises the class for good behavior.	.727				
16. Praises individual students for good behavior.	.732				
17. Rewards the class when students behave well.	.745				
<b>Aggression</b>					
18. Yells angrily at students who misbehave.	.551				
19. Deliberately embarrasses students who misbehave.	.768				
20. Keeps the class in because some students misbehave.	.777				
21. Makes sarcastic comments to students who misbehave.	.734				
<b>Discussion</b>					
22. Organizes the class to work out the rules for good behavior.	.486				
23. Decides with the class what should happen to students who misbehave.	.627				
24. Makes students leave the room until they decide to behave properly.	.648				
<b>Variance</b>	24.29	17.62	6.23	4.68	4.19