Coping Styles and Satisfaction with Classroom Management Techniques among Oman Public School EFL Teachers

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the relationship between English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instructors' preferred coping styles and their levels of satisfaction with classroom management techniques. One hundred and sixteen (116) participants teaching in Omani public schools were administered a three-part questionnaire. Descriptive and inferential analysis, including Pearson correlation coefficients and independent samples t-tests, were used to determine preferred coping styles and relationships between styles and satisfaction with classroom management. Results indicate participants were more likely to use the active coping styles of Relaxation and Social Problem Solving than Passive-Avoidance. This preference was not impacted upon by gender or grade taught (Cycle 1 or Cycle 2). Only a weak relationship was found between the use of Relaxation and satisfaction with classroom management, although no other statistically significant correlations existed. These findings can inform teacher training about the use of strategies associated with more positive coping styles, and for classroom management approaches in both Omani public schools and similar education contexts worldwide.

Keywords: Basic education, classroom management, coping styles, EFL, Oman

INTRODUCTION

Teaching necessarily involves a large amount of affect as teachers are prone to experience a myriad of feelings during the school day (Brophy, 1986). Many of these emotional responses "arise from management and disciplinary classroom interaction" (Sutton et al., 2009). Yelling, loss of temper, and displays of verbal and physical aggression can damage the teacher-

student relationship and discourage students from learning subject matter. Consequently, Sutton et al. (2009) stated that, to achieve set instructional objectives, teachers must regulate their emotions through the use of various coping strategies. The range of emotion regulation and coping strategies available to teachers is quite large (Hoots, 2014; Lewis et al., 2011). Teachers employ a selection of these strategies because "overriding the immediate subjective emotion experience assists their longer-term goals, thus making them much more effective" (Sutton et al., 2009, p. 132).

Coping strategies are defined by Lazarus (1993) as "ongoing cognitive and behavioural efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of the person" (p. 237). While this definition focuses on cognitive and behavioural reactions to everyday events, Romi et al. (2013) reminded readers of the importance of affective responses and how coping, as a dynamic process that changed over time, was dependent on contexts and actors. A teacher's use of coping strategies may directly impact on their levels of stress, attrition, job satisfaction, and quality of work. These strategies are especially important for teachers, according to Kebbi and Al-Hroub (2018), as they are prone to experience high levels of stress that can negatively impact their decision-making ability and classroom actions. As a result, coping strategy preference can be considered an important factor associated with teaching effectiveness and the overall quality of instruction students receive.

Individual personality traits, including resilience, extraversion, and openness to experience, may be related to preferred coping strategies and how well people, including teachers, handle stress (Afshar et al., 2015; Romi et al., 2013). Afshar et al. (2015) noted that certain personality traits were associated with the use of more active coping strategies which generally contributed to more positive outcomes. Active coping strategies, including problem engagement and seeking support, are often linked in the literature with more effective teacher instruction.

Active coping strategies used by teachers, according to Sharplin et al. (2011), include seeking support and advice from others and being proactive in dealing with stress and problems. The use of these strategies may be an effective mitigator of teacher stress (Asmaa et al., 2018). On the other hand, avoidance strategies involve teachers' attempts to avoid the sources of stress. The use of these strategies has been associated with a lack of professional accomplishment, emotional exhaustion, and the depersonalisation of students. The tendency to use avoidance strategies, moreover, may be related to increased stress levels and the emergence of more or stronger negative symptoms. As a result, these strategies are less beneficial than directly confronting stressors and using active coping strategies to deal with them.

While teachers encounter any number of stressors in their professional lives, classroom management often presents one of the biggest challenges. This is especially

true of novice teachers (Dicke et al., 2015). Classroom management, or teacher actions to create a supportive, safe, and effective learning environment, (Brophy, 2006; Evertson & Weinstein, 2006), is often linked in the literature to teacher stress (Dicke et al., 2015). Teachers with ineffective classroom management techniques are more likely to experience higher levels of classroom stress. According to Sharplin et al. (2011), teachers who experience higher levels of stress may be more likely to engage in avoidance coping strategies. Salkovsky et al.'s (2015) model highlights the relationship between the stress caused by the disparity between teachers' preferred and actual classroom management techniques and their use of coping styles. This model forms one of the theoretical bases for the current study.

Despite the importance of coping styles for teacher personal and professional well-being, this is an area that has received little direct investigative attention in the Omani context. An exploration of Omani English teachers' classroom management techniques and coping styles was considered important due to the potential impact of these factors on the quality of instruction taking place in the country's public school classrooms. In particular, the literature reports that Omani school students generally graduate with limited English language skills to an extent that is detrimental to their future studies and careers (Al-Mahrooqi & Tuzlukova, 2014). Numerous factors associated with this issue have been examined, with teachers and the quality of teaching being offered as amongst the most influential (Al-Mahrooqi & Denman, 2016).

Due to the potential influence that teacher coping styles and classroom management have on the quality of teaching, this research examined the link between teacher satisfaction with classroom management techniques and coping style preference among Cycle 1 (grades 1-4) and Cycle 2 (grades 5-10) EFL instructors in Oman's public schools. It did this by examining the following research questions:

1. What are the preferred coping styles (Social Problem Solving, Passive-Avoidance, Relaxation) of Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 EFL teachers in Oman's public schools?

2. Is coping style preference impacted upon by the variables of teacher gender and grades taught (Cycle 1 or Cycle 2)? If yes, how?

3. What relationship, if any, is there between teachers' satisfaction with their classroom management techniques and coping style preference?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Coping Styles

Hoots (2014), citing Lazarus and Folkman (1984), stated that there were two primary coping styles: emotion-focused and problem-focused. The former involves efforts made to regulate emotional responses by increasing emotional balance and tolerance of a stressful situation. Problem-focused coping styles, on the other hand, encompass efforts to deal with stress by taking some form of action to minimise or alter its source. The use of problem-focused coping styles has

been associated in the literature with the effective mediation of the link between stressors and emotional exhaustion among teachers (Pogerea et al., 2019). Hoots (2014) continued that people usually combined these coping styles, although emotion-focused coping styles were generally used when an individual believed that they could not change or avoid the source of the stress, while problem-focused styles were employed when the person believed taking action would help to minimise it.

Lewis et al. (2011) expanded upon this dichotomy by offering three main coping styles. The first is Social Problem Solving, which is a process whereby a person identifies and discovers effective ways of coping with stressful situations in their daily lives (D'Zurilla et al., 2004). Social Problem Solving encompasses such strategies as attempting to solve the problem, putting effort into one's work, asking a professional for help, talking to colleagues and giving each other support, going to meetings that focus on the problem, and improving relationships with others.

The next main coping style offered by Lewis et al. (2011) was Passive-Avoidance. Passive Avoidance entails efforts to minimise or ignore the stressor (Afshar et al., 2015). It is associated with the strategies of consciously blocking out the problem, not letting others know how one is feeling, not worrying about how things will turn out, daydreaming that things will turn out well, blaming oneself, and getting sick. The final coping style offered by Lewis et al. is

Relaxation. Relaxation includes making time for leisure activities, playing sports, trying to be funny and so on.

Classroom Management

Classroom management encompasses the actions instructors take to create a learning environment that is conductive to their students' academic and socio-emotional development (Brophy, 2006; Evertson & Weinstein, 2006). It is an essential aspect of successful teaching and learning environments, though one that many teachers, especially during the early years of their careers, can find particularly challenging (Dicke et al., 2015). Effective classroom management approaches are associated, according to Lyons et al. (2014), with successful, satisfied teachers and students who share a sense of belonging in a safe and happy learning environment. However, Romi et al. (2013) maintained that classroom management issues, alongside student misbehaviour, were among the major sources of teacher stress.

Lewis et al. (2011) reported that teachers who used more socially-oriented problem solving, here defined as a tendency to employ Social Problem Solving coping styles, generally used more inclusive classroom management techniques. These include recognising appropriate behaviour, hinting, discussion, ensuring student involvement and so on. On the other hand, instructors who use more Passive-Avoidance coping styles are prone to use aggressive classroom management

techniques, including yelling angrily, embarrassing/humiliating misbehaving learners, group punishment and so on.

The use of Passive-Avoidance coping styles may actually cause higher levels of stress in the classroom, thereby contributing to teacher burnout, staff turnover, and teacher depersonalisation of learners (Romi et al., 2013). Feeding further into this cycle, Austin et al. (2005) claimed that teachers who experienced higher levels of stress might be more likely to employ negative coping strategies, such as those associated with Passive-Avoidance coping styles. It is due to this relationship that teachers' use of more positive coping styles may be one of the most important factors associated with effective classroom management.

Relationship between Coping Styles and Classroom Management

Romi et al. (2013) examined the relationship between coping styles and classroom management in Australia, China, and Israel. The authors reported variations in the nature of these relationships across the three research contexts. For example, instructors in China generally used wishing and praying as coping strategies more than their non-Chinese counterparts, while worrying in Israel was associated with the active seeking of professional help and input (Social Problem Solving). These cultural differences between the three featured nations suggest that many of the understandings of teacher coping styles posited in the literature may be highly culturally-bound.

The model offered by Salkovsky et al. (2015) hypothesised the relationships between teacher stress, coping styles, and classroom management inhibitors by focusing on how teacher stress caused by the gap between preferred and actual classroom management techniques contributes to the use of a particular coping style. Classroom management inhibitors in this model, including students, classrooms, parents, the school and so on, contribute to this stress while also sharing a two-way relationship with teachers' use of coping styles. As a result, Salkovsky et al. (2015) maintained that particular classroom management inhibitors "may result in greater use of a particular coping style".

While Romi et al. (2013), Lewis et al. (2011) and Salkovsky et al. (2015) explored, among other variables, various aspects of the relationship between teacher coping styles and classroom management techniques, very little direct attention had been paid in the literature to the potential link between teacher satisfaction with their classroom management techniques and use of coping styles. This was considered a potentially interesting area following from Salkovsky et al.'s (2015) study of the stress caused by the disparity between actual and preferred classroom management techniques, here conceived of in terms of levels of satisfaction with classroom management, and coping style use. Directly referencing Romi et al.'s (2013) cross-cultural work, the study was conducted in a research context that has, to date, received very little topic-related

investigative attention and where the quality of instruction taking place had been the focus of increasing amounts of investigative concern – Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 EFL classes in Omani public schools.

METHODS

Sample

After receiving relevant ethics approvals and administrative permissions, the research team recruited English teachers from a number of government Basic Education schools across Oman. The research team, after securing the permission of school administrators, approached English teachers at their schools with information about the study, including its purpose, voluntary and confidential nature, and participant rights. The only criteria for selection was that participants were currently teaching English in either Cycle 1 (grades 1-4) or Cycle 2 (grades 5-10) in Omani public Basic Education schools.

Participants were asked to complete a pen-and-paper version of the questionnaire and to return it to the researchers during the same day as administration. A total of 116 English teachers from schools across 11 governorates were recruited. Of these, 75 (64.7%) were female and 41 (35.3%) were male. Thirty-two participants (27.6%) taught in Cycle 1 schools, 78 (67.2%) in Cycle 2, while the remaining participants did not indicate the grade they were currently teaching.

Instrument

In order to explore the potential relationship between Oman public school EFL teachers' satisfaction with classroom management techniques and their preferred coping styles, a questionnaire, largely based on the instrument developed by Akin-Little et al. (2007) and the work of Lewis et al. (2011), was developed by the researchers. After the instrument was adapted by the research team, it was submitted to a panel of five professors and instructors at an Omani public university for validation. Panel feedback focused on issues of validity, content coverage, item wording and so on. The panel feedback guided the further modification of the instrument into its final form.

Due to time constraints associated with the data collection window, including the need to approach public schools during a relatively quiet period of the school semester, a pilot study was not conducted. However, Cronbach alpha analysis was performed to determine the internal consistency of relevant questionnaire categories (see Data Analysis). As the current study was part of a larger, nation-wide investigation, this paper focuses on data collected on three parts of the larger questionnaire.

The first part elicited participant background information. The second featured 15 coping strategies associated with Social Problem Solving, Passive-Avoidance Coping, and Relaxation coping styles that were adapted from Lewis et al. (2011). Participants were asked to indicate

how often they employ each strategy on a 5-point Likert-type response scale with the response options of: Never (1); Rarely (2); Sometimes (3); Often (4); and Always (5). The strategies associated with each coping style are featured in Table 1.

The final part of the questionnaire was concerned with participant satisfaction with their classroom management. Satisfaction was measured by three questionnaire items: I am pleased with my classroom management techniques; I feel my classroom management techniques are adequate; and I would like to learn more about being an effective classroom manager. Participants were asked to respond to these items on a 5-point Likert-type response scale with response options ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5).

Data Analysis

As stated above, a Cronbach alpha coefficient was calculated to determine the internal consistency of the second part of the questionnaire (teacher coping styles). Descriptive analysis, including frequency counts and medians, was performed on the ordinal data collected from this questionnaire part. Aggregate scores for each of the three coping styles were next calculated and resultant values treated as interval data. A series of independent samples t-tests was used to explore whether the variables of gender and grade taught impacted upon preference for the three coping styles. The acceptable probability level for the t-tests was set at $p \leq 0.05$.

Means and standard deviations were used to analyse the interval data collected through the three items from the third part of the questionnaire (teacher satisfaction with classroom management techniques). Independent samples t-tests were calculated for the independent variables of gender and grades taught and each of these items. Next, Pearson's correlation coefficients were used to examine the strength and statistical significance of relationships between the three questionnaire coping styles and participants' satisfaction with their classroom management techniques. Assumptions of normality for each variable were examined through the use of histograms and by examining skewness and kurtosis values. These values all fell within the -2 to +2 range (George & Mallery, 2010); thus, normal distribution was assumed. Acceptable probability levels for the independent samples t-tests and the correlation coefficients were again set at $p \leq 0.05$.

RESULTS

The Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient for the second questionnaire part was 0.74, thereby indicating an acceptable level of internal consistency. Table 1 features coping strategies in descending order from the most frequently-employed to the least based on both median and percent of participants who always use each strategy. Eight of the 15 coping strategies received medians of 4, which indicates that participants often use them. These include, "Daydreaming about

Table 1
Teacher use of coping strategies

Style	Coping Strategy	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always	No response	Median
PA	Daydreaming about a successful solution to the misbehaviour	3.4	6.9	21.6	20.7	43.1	4.3	4.00
SPS	Attempting to understand the cause of the misbehaviour	0.0	1.7	19.0	38.8	39.7	0.9	4.00
R	Accepting my students' best efforts without demanding much from them	1.7	3.4	26.7	37.9	27.6	2.6	4.00
SPS	Improving my relationship with others to help overcome any negative feelings I have	4.3	7.8	27.6	34.5	23.3	2.6	4.00
R	Using humour either inside or outside the classroom	0.9	15.5	32.8	30.2	19.8	0.9	4.00
PA	Worrying about whether the misbehaviour will continue	12.9	9.5	24.1	33.6	16.4	3.4	4.00
R	Finding a way to reduce my stress	1.7	11.2	26.7	41.4	16.4	2.6	4.00
R	Making time for leisure activities	0.9	6.0	36.2	37.9	16.4	2.6	4.00
SPS	Talking to other teachers to gain their support	9.5	19.0	31.9	25.0	12.9	1.7	3.00
SPS	Putting effort into my work so I can forget the misbehaviour	6.9	11.2	34.5	36.2	10.3	0.9	3.00
SPS	Asking a colleague or other expert for help in dealing with the misbehaviour	8.6	15.5	38.8	26.7	9.5	0.9	3.00
PA	Not letting others know how I feel	12.9	20.7	33.6	21.6	8.6	2.6	3.00
PA	Refusing to think about the misbehaviour	23.3	19.8	28.4	19.0	7.8	1.7	3.00
PA	Blaming myself for the misbehaviour	23.3	18.1	30.2	15.5	6.9	6.0	3.00
SPS	Going to meetings where the misbehaviour is discussed	7.8	28.4	33.6	23.3	5.2	1.7	3.00

*SPS = Social Problem Solving; PA = Passive-Avoidance; R = Relaxation / **Rounding error means row totals may sum to 0.1% higher or lower than 100%

a successful solution to the misbehaviour" (PA) with 43.1% of participants always using this strategy, "Attempting to understand the cause of the misbehaviour" (SPS) (39.7% always), "Accepting my students' best efforts without demanding much from them" (R) (27.6% always), and, "Improving my relationship with others to help overcome any negative feelings I have" (SPS) (23.3% always). Other items that recorded a median of 4 are: "Using humour either inside or outside the classroom" (R) (19.8% always), "Worrying about whether the misbehaviour will continue" (PA) (16.4% always), "Finding a way to reduce my stress" (R) (16.4% always), and, "Making time for leisure activities" (R) (16.4% always).

The remaining coping strategies all recorded medians of 3, indicating that participants generally use them sometimes. These include, "Talking to other teachers to gain their support" (SPS) (12.9% always), "Putting effort into my work so I can forget the misbehaviour" (SPS) (10.3% always), "Asking a colleague or other expert for help in dealing with the misbehaviour" (SPS) (9.5% always), and, "Not letting others know how I feel" (PA) (8.6% always). The items that received the lowest percentages in the always response column are, "Refusing to think about the misbehaviour" (PA) (7.8% always), "Blaming myself for the misbehaviour" (PA) (6.9% always), and, "Going to meetings where the misbehaviour is discussed" (SPS) (5.2% always).

Aggregate scores for the three coping strategies were calculated. The mean for Social Problem Solving was 20.35 ($SD = 3.63$), with 6 representing the lowest possible score and 30 the highest, 14.63 ($SD = 2.39$) for Relaxation, where 4 is the lowest possible score and 20 the highest, and 15.36 ($SD = 3.61$) for Passive-Avoidance where 5 is the lowest possible score and 25 the highest. Independent samples t-tests were calculated to explore whether coping style aggregate scores were impacted upon by the independent variables of gender and grade taught (Cycle 1 or Cycle 2). No statistically significant differences for either variable were found at the $p \leq 0.05$ level.

Participant responses to the three items dealing with participants' level of satisfaction with their classroom management techniques are featured in Table 2. Respondents agreed that they were pleased with their classroom management techniques ($M = 4.05$, $SD = 0.94$) and felt their classroom management techniques were adequate ($M = 3.82$, $SD = 0.90$). Despite this apparent level of satisfaction, teachers also agreed that they would like to learn more about being effective classroom managers ($M = 4.04$, $SD = 1.17$).

Table 2
Satisfaction with classroom management techniques

Item	Mean	SD
I am pleased with my classroom management techniques.	4.05	0.94
I feel my classroom management techniques are adequate.	3.82	0.90
I would like to learn more about being an effective classroom manager.	4.04	1.17

Independent samples t-tests were conducted for the variables of gender and grade taught for these items. Gender was found to have a statistically significant difference at the $p \leq 0.05$ level with the first two items. Female participants ($M = 4.22$, $SD = 0.87$) agreed more strongly that they were pleased with their classroom management techniques than their male counterparts ($M = 3.73$, $SD = 0.99$) ($t(104) = 2.62$; $p = 0.01$). Similarly, female participants ($M = 3.97$, $SD = 0.87$) also agreed more strongly than male respondents ($M = 3.53$, $SD = 0.88$) that their classroom management techniques were adequate ($t(103) = 2.46$; $p = 0.02$). No statistically significant differences were found for these items based on the variable of grade taught.

Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated to determine if statistically significant relationships existed between teachers' reported satisfaction with their classroom management techniques and their use of coping styles. Table 3 indicates that teachers' use of Social Problem Solving did not have a significant correlation with any of the three items. The use of coping strategies related to Relaxation displayed a weak positive, though statistically significant, correlation with the first item, "I am pleased with my classroom management techniques" ($r = 0.22$, $p = 0.03$), though not with remaining items. Finally, there did not appear to be a linear relationship between Passive-Avoidance coping styles and each of the three items.

DISCUSSION

Preferred Coping Styles

The first research question explored the preferred coping styles and associated strategies used by EFL teachers in Cycle 1 and 2 Omani Basic Education public schools. Overall, participants were most likely to use coping strategies related to the coping style of Relaxation ($M = 14.63$ from a highest possible aggregate score of 20), followed by Social Problem Solving ($M = 20.35$ from 30), and then Passive-Avoidance ($M = 15.36$ from 25). Participants indicated that they often used eight of the 15 coping strategies featured in the questionnaire, with these being drawn from all three of Lewis et al.'s (2011) main coping styles.

Table 3
Correlations between coping styles and classroom management satisfaction

Item	Social Problem Solving	Relaxation	Passive-Avoidance
I am pleased with my classroom management techniques.	0.19	0.22*	-0.01
I feel my classroom management techniques are adequate.	0.05	0.15	0.06
I would like to learn more about being an effective classroom manager.	0.11	0.15	0.02

*Significant at the $p \leq 0.05$ level

The Relaxation strategies teachers reported using included finding ways to reduce stress, engaging in leisure activities, using humour, and accepting their learners' best efforts without making too many demands. Social Problem Solving strategies often used by respondents included trying to improve relationships with others and attempting to understand the cause of the misbehaviour. The two strategies that respondents sometimes engaged in were also both from the Social Problem Solving coping style – talking to other teachers for support and asking them for help in dealing with the misbehaviour. In terms of Passive-Avoidance, respondents reported often engaging in daydreaming about achieving a successful solution to the issue, and worrying that the misbehaviour will continue.

One of the three least commonly used coping strategies was related to Social Problem Solving – discussing the misbehaviour at meetings – while the remaining two were drawn from Lewis et al.'s (2011) Passive-Avoidance coping style. These were the Passive-Avoidance strategies of refusing to think about the misbehaviour and teachers blaming themselves for the problem. The fact that EFL teachers in Omani public schools appear more likely to employ strategies associated with Social Problem Solving and Relaxation coping styles than Passive-Avoidance is a positive sign. It indicates that, overall, participants tend to take more problem-focused, positive

approaches to coping that are more likely to successfully mitigate classroom stress (Asmaa et al., 2018; Austin et al., 2005; Hoots, 2014).

Despite this, the relative frequency of use of the Passive-Avoidance coping strategies of daydreaming and worrying about the continuance of the misbehaviour may represent a potential cause for concern, especially if engaging in such strategies contributes to higher stress levels. However, this result should be interpreted in light of Romi et al.'s (2013) finding that the use of worrying in Israel was associated with teachers actively seeking professional help and guidance. In this context, worrying about misbehaviour is more closely linked with Social Problem Solving than Passive-Avoidance coping styles. While an exploration of the specific behaviours associated with each of the coping strategies and styles featured in the current study was beyond the purview of the current research, an examination of these, and other culturally-bound, teacher actions associated with different coping styles may be a promising area of future research. Similarly, as the teacher variables of gender, contrary to Salkovsky et al.'s (2015) findings, and grade taught did not have a statistically significant impact on preferred use of coping styles, the examination of other teacher variables in the Omani context, including stress levels and attitudes towards learners and learner behaviour (Alhija, 2015), may also be informative.

Satisfaction with Classroom Management Techniques

In response to the third part of the questionnaire, participants indicated that they were largely satisfied with their classroom management techniques. However, despite this reported level of satisfaction, they also agreed that they would like to learn more about being effective classroom managers.

The challenges associated with the current professional development system for public school teachers in Oman have been noted previously. Authors such as Al Jabri et al. (2018) detailed the introduction of the Ministry of Education's Specialised Centre for Professional Training of Teachers in 2014 as an important step in offering systematic, monitored training opportunities for teachers. Under the aegis of this centre, professional development opportunities that focused on both coping styles and classroom management techniques could be offered.

As no statistically significant differences in level of satisfaction or desire for future training opportunities in this area were identified based on grade taught, any training offered could be made available for both Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 teachers. The gender difference of female teachers being more satisfied with their classroom management techniques than their male colleagues could also be viewed as a potential asset in the training process, in that mixed training groups can learn from each other's perceptions and experiences, in addition to the unique experiences associated with Cycle 2 student and teacher gender-segregated schools.

Relationship between Coping Styles and Classroom Management

Based on the literature and their own professional experiences in the research context, the authors expected to find positive correlations between teacher level of satisfaction with classroom management techniques and use of Social Problem Solving and Relaxation on the one hand, and a negative correlation between satisfaction and Passive Avoidance coping styles on the other (Austin et al., 2005; Dicke et al., 2015). This expectation was also founded on the hypothesised relationship between stress caused by the disparity between actual and preferred classroom management techniques and coping styles as offered in Salkovsky et al.'s (2015) model. These expectations, however, were only partially met.

Pearson correlation coefficients between the first classroom management item, "I am pleased with my classroom management techniques" and the coping style of Relaxation ($r = 0.22$, $p \leq 0.05$), were positive but weak, while this item did not share a significant correlation with either Social Problem Solving or Passive Avoidance coping styles. Moreover, no statistically significant linear associations between all three coping styles and the items, "I feel my classroom management techniques are adequate", and, "I would like to learn more about being an effective classroom manager," were found.

This finding suggests that, while a positive relationship between being pleased with classroom management techniques and the use of coping techniques associated

with Relaxation, such as engaging in leisure activities, playing sport and so on, might exist among Omani teachers, in general no relationship exists between their overall satisfaction with classroom management techniques and preferred coping styles, at least as far as these variables were measured in the current research. Future research, however, could adopt a more systematic approach to determine teachers' level of satisfaction with classroom management techniques, and could also explore whether a relationship between coping strategies and actual classroom practice exists (see Conclusion).

CONCLUSION

The current study's findings suggest that, overall, Cycle 1 and 2 public school EFL teachers in Oman generally engage in positive, active coping strategies associated with Relaxation and Social Problem Solving coping styles, with this preference largely not influenced by teachers' gender or the grade in which they teach. These teachers are also largely satisfied with their classroom management techniques, although they indicate a desire for continued professional development in this area. While the frequent use of worrying about misbehaviour and daydreaming about a successful resolution to the issue may indicate a potential cause for concern, future research exploring associated teacher actions within the Omani socio-cultural context could provide greater detail about whether these strategies were related to the use of more active or passive coping styles. Finally, there does not appear

to be significant relationship between preferred coping styles and satisfaction with classroom management, although a preference for Relaxation did share a weak, positive relationship with teacher satisfaction.

A number of limitations must be acknowledged when seeking to interpret these findings and when applying them to similar education contexts both within the Arab world and beyond. First, only three items were employed to gauge teachers' level of satisfaction with their classroom management techniques. Although the brevity of this questionnaire part was intended to help avoid respondent fatigue in response to the larger instrument used in the full-scale study, future research could either expand this scale or use an adapted version of a classroom management instrument that focuses on teacher practice, such as the Questionnaire on Classroom Management in Early Childhood Education (Nault, 1994, adapted by Pozo, 2003). This approach would allow researchers to develop a more accurate picture of participants' actual classroom management techniques, thereby providing a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between these techniques and coping styles.

In addition, the current study only focused on EFL teachers from Cycles 1 and 2 (grades 1-10) of Omani public schools. Future research could explore coping styles and/or satisfaction with classroom management techniques among teachers from across subject areas in both cycles, and could compare these with teachers

in Post Basic education (grades 11-12). Finally, although the adapted questionnaire used in the current study underwent a validation process and Cronbach alpha coefficients were calculated to determine its internal validity, further exploration of its psychometric qualities is necessary to ensure that it accurately measures teachers' preferred coping styles.

The current study's status as exploratory research means that future investigations will be necessary to more fully examine the potential relationship between teachers' coping styles and satisfaction with their classroom management techniques, in addition to links between coping styles and actual classroom practice, even if only minimal evidence of these relationships is reported here. Gaining a clearer understanding of this area may contribute to the quality of English language instruction taking place, not just in Omani schools, but also in similar education contexts around the world.

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