

English Teachers' Perceptions of the Role of Lesson Planning in Classroom Management

Dr. Rashed Zannan Alghamdy

Education College, Al-Baha University, Saudi Arabia

E-mail: rz000@hotmail.com

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Abstract

In the present article, the researcher aims to identify the relationship between lesson plans and classroom management and attempt to determine the effect of English teachers' lesson preparation on the implementation of those lessons. Further, I seek to explore English teachers' perceptions toward the role of lesson planning in classroom management in Saudi English as a first language (EFL) classroom. I collect data from 87 English teachers in secondary schools in Al-Baha City via electronic questionnaire, and the findings demonstrate the importance of lesson planning in classroom management, revealing that Saudi English teachers prepare their lessons effectively to sufficiently manage classrooms. In addition, the results indicate that lesson planning is an essential skill that English teachers must cultivate to create a successful classroom environment. Moreover, the outcomes of the present study highlight most Saudi English teachers' attitudes toward the role of lesson planning in classroom management are positive. Finally, it indicates a significant and positive relationship between effective lesson preparation and teachers' abilities to create a successful EFL classroom environment.

Keywords: English teachers, Lesson planning, Classroom management, Saudi Arabia

1. Introduction

Effective teaching enables learners to develop their skills in a conducive environment and independently apply concepts taught. Teaching effectiveness cannot be measured by student performance but rather educators' ability to appropriately plan for lessons and engage learners throughout the learning process, defusing students' desire to engage in misbehavior (Moradi, 2019). Lesson planning is the process by which an educator sets objectives, prepares activities for meeting those objectives, and develops a timeline on which to achieve classroom goals (Singapore Management University, 2020). Based on this understanding, a lesson plan can be described as a map teachers use to ensure that lesson goals are achieved

within an intended time frame; it also dictates the strategies and procedures to achieve those objectives. An educator develops activities, strategies, and evaluation mechanisms during lesson planning to ensure teaching effectiveness (Batubara et al., 2020; Derin et al., 2020). Regardless of how good an educator is, lesson plans significantly increase productivity.

Classroom management includes the approaches used in determining classroom proceedings. Rothstein (2008) noted that classroom management is also referred to as the association between an educator's ability and learners' conduct, which together leads to the creation of a conducive environment for both teaching and learning. Classroom management may include determining the rules, words, and actions used to facilitate operations to meet education goals (Groves, 2009).

Lesson planning and classroom management are often challenging for policymakers and English language teachers regarding English as a first language (EFL) goals. Teachers may fail to meet their teaching objectives due to ineffective lesson planning and classroom management (Ali, 2021); this can result in learners experiencing difficulty achieving their learning goals. Despite efforts to address such challenges, more must be done for teachers and learners to comprehensively benefit from sufficient lesson planning and classroom management; this may include more integrated and comprehensive education programs to ensure that teachers can undertake complex tasks revolving around lesson planning and classroom management (Khan, 2020). Failure to address this issue will further cripple the pursuit of an effective and efficient mechanism for achieving educational goals for all stakeholders.

Teaching occurs when teachers and learners interact to achieve their respective goals. As such, the student–teacher relationship is a primary determinant of success in any education setting: teachers cannot succeed in classroom management without developing and maintaining healthy relationships with their students. However, the effectiveness of classroom management is determined by teachers' preparedness (Moradi, 2019). Classroom management involves an awareness of all classroom occurrences, thereby facilitating a learning-conducive environment. However, managing the events during a lesson significantly depends on how much one anticipates certain occurrences and knows what to do (Hanane, 2016). Thus, in the present study, I evaluate the mechanisms for lesson plan development in Saudi Arabian secondary schools. Additionally, I discuss useful strategies for classroom management and how they can help ensure that both teaching and learning goals are achieved in the Saudi Arabian secondary education setting. In this research, I concentrate on the following four research questions:

1. How do Saudi EFL teachers plan and prepare for lessons?
2. How do Saudi EFL teachers implement their lessons plans to manage their classrooms?
3. To what extent do Saudi EFL teachers apply classroom management?
4. What are Saudi EFL teachers' attitudes toward the role of lesson planning in classroom management?

2. Literature Review

Sesiorina (2014) noted that a lesson plan is a representation that must be used alongside a teaching curriculum in preparing for classroom lessons. Mahon (2011) defined a lesson plan as an organized outline that signals instructions by directing educators on which instruction techniques to use for lessons depending on the intended goals and the teaching circumstances. An alternative definition of a lesson plan is the process through which teachers think and write down the strategies they intend to use to achieve lesson goals, focusing on aspects such as the number of students, their specific learning needs, and the time allocated for the lesson to take place (Savage, 2014). Similarly, Farrell (2002) described a lesson plan as a written description of how a teacher intends to guide students toward achieving a lesson's learning goals. Moreover, Mohan (2007) defined a lesson plan as a detailed outline of the essential points of a lesson arranged in the order in which they are to be explained to learners by the teacher. There are inconsistencies in the various definitions of lesson plans (Hanane, 2016). Planning is also seen as a way of effectively presenting the teaching experience (Lakchmi & Bhaskara, 2016). The most conspicuous one is that it is a tool that teachers prepare for their lessons based on the specific needs of every learning environment.

According to Singh (2008), there are various reasons why teachers create lesson plans. First, it is an outline through which teachers prepare lessons and organize their activities to match a lesson's needs. Second, it is a tool for effectively highlighting a lesson's goals, given that each lesson should begin with a clear direction; this is the only way to ensure that a lesson will serve its purpose. Third, it presents a series of activities that a teacher intends to implement to cover the lesson's content. Fourth, it presents an understanding of the most appropriate way to enable learners to relate their existing knowledge with their newly learned knowledge. Fifth, it is often based on the most important principles of knowledge acquisition. Sixth, it is based on an understanding of the relationship between teaching practice and classroom management. Seventh, it enables teachers to respect and adhere to a content sequence and structure rather than rely on memory alone. Eighth, it allows students to be appropriately placed during a lesson. Ninth, it positively influences a teachers' effectiveness in the classroom. Finally, having a lesson plan makes lessons reachable.

According to Fujii (2019), a lesson plan is an important outcome of a lesson study. The collaborative work that teachers put into developing and implementing lesson plans often goes unnoticed. This is because such engagements are invisible to outsiders. Based on case studies undertaken at Tokyo Gakugei University in three Japanese schools, successful lesson plan development depends on task design and the commitment of teachers to ensure the process is as evidence-based as possible (Fujii, 2019). This is often the reason why lesson plans are not transferable because lesson needs and contexts differ in various ways.

According to Vermunt et al. (2019), when a teacher is conversant with the meaning of application, a lesson study becomes increasingly influential in their teaching practice. Thus, it takes an appreciation of the importance of lesson study and planning for a teacher to effectively plan for their lessons.

According to Saito et al. (2018), lesson plan creation is influenced by students' and teachers'

shared needs, and it is only through elaborate and evidence-based guidance that teachers can ensure that these needs are met. Lessons are about not only covering content but also ensuring that it is presented to facilitate learning goals; well-intended but disorganized activities may be ineffective in engaging learners to the satisfaction of the lesson objectives.

Lynch and Warner (2008) noted that an effective lesson plan is one that addresses individual variances among the learners. It should never be assumed that each learner has the same cognitive and learning ability levels, and the one-size-fits-all approach to developing a lesson plan has proven ineffective. Thus, lesson plans should ensure that the diversity of learning needs and abilities is considered (Lynch & Warner, 2008). These learning variances extend beyond typical diversities in the general population.

Over the years, researchers have found classroom management strategies to impact not only students' learning but also other factors such as anxiety. There is no guarantee that the response to different classroom management strategies will be similar for all learners. Marashi and Asggar (2019) found that classroom management strategies had a significant impact on student learning outcomes and directly affected students' anxiety levels during lessons, which can significantly affect learning abilities and outcomes. However, classroom management strategies cannot work for students with anxiety unless they are designed to; thus, anxiety reduction should be emphasized. Some authors argue that classroom management should focus on influencing students' behavior during lessons rather than the contents of the lessons themselves. Evertson and Poole (2008) noted that this also entails actions deliberately taken to promote both students' socioemotional and their academic experiences during lessons.

According to Dustova and Cotton (2014), classroom management entails teachers using various skills and techniques to ensure that activities within the classroom setting are organized. It is also meant to ensure teachers use the same skills and techniques to facilitate active, attentive, and productive involvement of students in class. Additionally, teachers acquire some skills, including creating a positive classroom environment, organizing classrooms, interpersonal relationships, managing classroom activities, and putting in place rules and procedures that determine engagement in a learning environment. Thus, as proposed by George et al. (2017), educational workshops and seminars should be organized to enable teachers to effective classroom management practices.

Bissonnette and Gauthier (2018) revealed that some approaches can be considered in classroom management, especially when one operates in a preschool setting. For instance, teachers can focus on preventing misconduct during lessons by using the preventive intervention approach, which is characterized by building a positive relationship with the learner to create a safe, orderly, and predictable environment for them. Teachers should also coach and supervise learners continuously, organize the classes, and use effective instruction approaches to yield the desired outcomes in classroom management (Bissonnette & Gauthier, 2018). Thus, lesson plans and other preparation methods can prevent undesired conduct in educational settings and yield the intended learning outcomes.

3. Lesson Plans to Manage Classrooms

Planning for a lesson is crucial to set the foundation for effective classroom management (Butt, 2006). The important role that purposeful class management plays in educational success implies that it requires sufficient preparation and can only occur with diligent lesson planning. Effective teachers plan for their classroom experiences, including how to appropriately manage the classroom (Othmane, 2015).

Teachers put their lesson plans into action through lesson implementation, which includes actions taken to mitigate the impact of student misbehavior on the outcome of a lesson (Lopes et al., 2017). When a lesson is poorly implemented, student engagement may be lower and misbehavior may increase; by contrast, appropriate and diligent lesson implementation can minimize the possibility of student misbehavior during a lesson (Sun & Shek, 2012). The importance of developing a lesson plan should never be overlooked; in a recent study, 87% of teachers noted that lesson plans are crucial even at the preschool level (Nkwabi, 2020). Thus, teachers should acquire and develop the needed skills for creating and implementing lesson plans and maintain a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between the two.

The importance of lesson planning in classroom management should not be underestimated (Nashruddin & Nurrachman, 2016; Othmane, 2015). When a teacher begins giving a lesson, they should have a documented plan detailing what must be done along with evidence related to why it should be done.

Lesson planning has a positive impact on the implementation of any lesson. However, this plan must be implemented diligently to create the desired impact on both the lesson and learners (Ali, 2021); otherwise, the outcome will be negative, and the resources and time expended on such an engagement will be wasted. Generally, teachers maintain a positive attitude toward lesson planning. However, unqualified or inexperienced teachers feel intimidated by lesson plans considering the tedious and demanding nature of the process of creating them.

Many teachers set objectives to achieve during lessons; planning for lessons might involve documenting various aspects, including presentation, production, and practice. Similarly, educators at the tertiary level use behavior- and discussion-based strategies to facilitate proactive classroom management and enhance the congruence of planning and educational outcomes.

In the present study, I used as a theoretical guide the assertive discipline approach developed by Lee Carter in the 1970s and expanded by Marlene Canter's work on education for students with behavioral challenges (Canter, 1979). The theory emphasizes the establishment of a discipline plan to maintain classroom order and ensure the best learning and teaching outcomes for involved parties (Lyons et al., 2011). Additionally, this approach highlights teachers' abilities to ensure that students respect the association among what must be learned, how the teacher intends the learning will take place, and the role each student must play. The model is characterized by the application of positive reinforcement for desirable behavior and negative reinforcement for misbehavior (ASCD, 2013).

The model promoted by assertive discipline approach theory was primarily developed to guide teachers on how to manage learners' behavior in classrooms (Malmgren et al., 2005). It is based on the notion that teachers are entitled to well-managed classrooms and students to learn in a well-controlled setting. Moreover, the approach incorporates the importance of planning for class control by implementing the appropriate approaches for ensuring disciplined student conduct. Establishing a discipline plan is a way of ensuring order and that the best teaching and learning practices are achieved (Lyons et al., 2011).

There are some positive practices that teachers can follow when applying the assertive discipline approach. Those who align with this model can create a positive learning environment by following four steps (Lyons et al., 2011). First, teachers should focus on knowing their learners, including their names and interests. Second, teachers should prepare and teach with the guidance of a comprehensive discipline plan that encompasses clearly communicated positive and negative implications of compliance and noncompliance, respectively. Third, teachers should establish a productive and ordered learning and teaching environment so that positive learning and teaching can be achieved. Finally, teachers should focus on enabling their learners to achieve academic success.

4. Methodology

4.1 Participants

Eighty-seven English teachers from government secondary schools in Al-Baha City, Saudi Arabia participated in this study.

4.2 Research Design

In the present study, I collected only quantitative data using a descriptive quantitative research design. Creswell (2012) highlighted that quantitative research allows for the collection and analysis of numerical data and concentrates on the links between a small number of attributes.

4.3 Research Instrument

To collect data, I used a modified questionnaire developed by Masome (2020) that included 30 points in four parts, as follows: lesson preparation and planning practice, lesson plan implementation, classroom management practices, and Saudi English teachers' attitudes toward the role of lesson planning in classroom management.

4.4 Procedures

To begin, I obtained consent forms from all participants prior to data collection. As mentioned, I used and modified the questionnaire developed by Masome (2020) to gather the data and reviewed the validity and reliability of the questionnaire. I informed all participants that their participation in the questionnaire was voluntary and that their names would not be revealed in the study's publication. Next, I distributed the questionnaire via electronic form; of the 87 questionnaires distributed, I received 82 back with responses. I used a 5-point Likert scale (from 1, indicating "Never" to 5, indicating "Always") to identify the English teachers'

perceptions of the role of lesson planning in classroom management (see the following Table 1).

Table 1. Range of Means to identify the English teachers' perceptions

N	Mean	Score
1	< 1.80	Never
2	1.81–2.60	Seldom
3	2.61–3.40	Sometimes
4	3.41–4.20	Often
5	4.21–5.00	Always

5. Results and Findings

To answer the first research question, I calculated the means and standard deviations related to lesson preparation and planning practices. Table 2, which follows, presents the results.

Table 2. Lesson Preparation and Planning Practices

Number	Skills	Mean	SD	Practice Strength	Order
1	How often do you plan lessons before teaching?	4.58	.642	Always	1
2	Do you carry lesson notes with you when teaching?	3.32	1.297	Sometimes	5
3	Do you prepare lesson notes before teaching?	3.92	1.239	Often	4
4	Do you prepare teaching aids (e.g., visual, audio, audio-visual) before teaching?	4.00	.900	Often	3
5	Do you believe your classroom environment accommodates the teaching techniques you plan to use?	4.21	.843	Always	2
Total		4.01	.728	Often	

As demonstrated in Table 2, the attitudes of participants showed a general trend toward approval related to lesson preparation and planning practice, with a mean score of 4.01. Significantly positive responses were provided for the following questions: “How often do you plan your lessons before teaching?” (mean score of 4.58); “Do you believe your classroom environment accommodates the teaching techniques you plan to use?” (mean score of 4.21); “Do you prepare teaching aids (e.g., visual, audio, audiovisual) before teaching?”

(mean score of 4.00); and “Do you prepare lesson notes before teaching?” (mean score of 3.92). In general, most teachers showed a general acceptance of lesson preparation and planning practice, and they largely answered positively when asked the listed questions.

To answer the second research question, I calculated the means and standard deviations related to how Saudi English teachers implement their lessons plans to manage EFL classrooms. Table 3 presents the results as follows.

Table 3. Lesson Plan Implementation

Number	Skills	Mean	SD	Practice Strength	Order
1	I promote the full participation of all students throughout my lessons.	4.05	.837	Often	4
2	I encourage students to ask questions.	4.34	.708	Always	1
3	I implement my lessons effectively and as planned.	4.08	.712	Often	3
4	I provide my students with exercises.	4.26	.950	Always	2
5	I effectively utilize visual, audio, and audio visual teaching aids.	4.34	.781	Always	1
6	I use a variety of procedures to evaluate learning progress during lessons (e.g., oral and written questions, activities).	3.89	1.008	Often	5
7	When a student misbehaves, I move closer to them for greater control.	3.87	1.095	Often	6
8	Before I begin lessons, I remind students of classroom rules.	3.68	1.254	Often	8
9	I identify and implement any needed improvements for future lessons.	3.84	1.053	Often	7
	Total	4.04	.580	Often	

As demonstrated in Table 3, teachers exhibited a general trend toward approval related to lesson preparation and planning practices, with a mean score of 4.04. Significantly positive responses were provided for the following statements: “I encourage students to ask questions” (mean score of 4.34), “I effectively use audio, visual, and audiovisual teaching aids” (mean score of 4.34), “I provide my students with exercises” (mean score of 4.26), “I implement my lessons effectively and as planned” (mean score of 4.08), and “I promote the full participation of all students throughout my lessons” (mean score of 4.05). In general, most teachers showed a general acceptance of lesson plan implementation, and they agreed with the statements listed.

To answer the third research question, I calculated the mean scores and standard deviations related to classroom management practices. Table 4 presents the results as follows.

Table 4. Classroom Management Practices

Number	Skills	Mean	SD	Practice Strength	Order
1	Students follow the classroom rules that I planned before implementing them.	3.68	.962	Often	3
2	Students share their knowledge and experiences with their peers.	3.71	.927	Often	2
3	I involve other students when correcting a student’s misbehavior.	3.49	1.044	Often	5
4	I arrange the classroom according to my particular lesson of the day.	3.42	.937	Often	6
5	Students are free to ask me a question when something is not clear.	4.43	.835	Always	1
6	Students make noise, move from one desk to another, cry, play, sing, or fight in the classroom during teaching.	3.66	1.258	Often	4
7	I always address student misbehaviors while I am teaching.	3.08	1.148	Sometimes	7
	Total	3.49	.469	Often	

As shown in Table 4, teachers generally agreed with the statements listed, exhibiting a mean score of 3.49. Significantly positive responses were provided for the following statements: “Students are free to ask me a question when something is not clear” (mean score of 4.43), “I involve other students when correcting a student’s misbehaviors” (mean score of 3.49), “Students share their knowledge and experiences with their peers” (mean score of 3.71), and “I arrange the classroom according to my particular lesson of the day” (mean score of 3.42). In general, most teachers showed a general acceptance of the given classroom management practices, and they agreed with most of the statements listed.

To answer fourth research question, I calculated the mean scores and standard deviations related to Saudi English teachers’ attitudes toward the role of lesson planning in classroom management. Table 5 presents these results as follows.

Table 5. Saudi English Teachers’ Attitudes Toward the Role of Lesson Planning in Classroom Management

Number	Skills	Mean	SD	Practice Strength	Order
1	In classroom management, lesson planning is important.	4.42	.793	Always	2
2	I understand the importance of lesson planning before teaching.	3.79	1.473	often	4
3	I feel confident, comfortable, and secure during teaching when I plan my lessons before teaching.	4.42	.826	Always	2
4	Lesson planning is beneficial for classroom management.	4.53	.725	Always	1
5	Experienced teachers need lesson plans for effective classroom management.	3.74	.950	Often	5
6	Planning students’ activities is effective in classroom management.	4.26	.860	Always	3
7	It is important to use lesson planning to manage overcrowded classrooms.	3.32	1.188	Sometimes	7
8	Lesson planning works well in my classroom management.	3.71	1.313	Often	6
	Total	4.02	.524	Often	

As shown in Table 5, teachers' attitudes showed a general trend toward approval of lesson plans related to classroom management, with a mean score of 4.02. Significantly positive responses were provided for the following statements: "Lesson planning is beneficial for classroom management" (mean score of 4.53), "Lesson planning is important in classroom management" (mean score of 4.42), "I feel confident, comfortable, and secure during teaching when I plan my lessons before teaching (mean score of 4.42), and "Planning students' activities is effective in classroom management" (mean score of 4.26). In general, most teachers showed a general acceptance of the role of lesson planning in classroom management, and their perceptions were positive toward most of the statements. Means of the Study axis can be clarified in the following Figure 1.

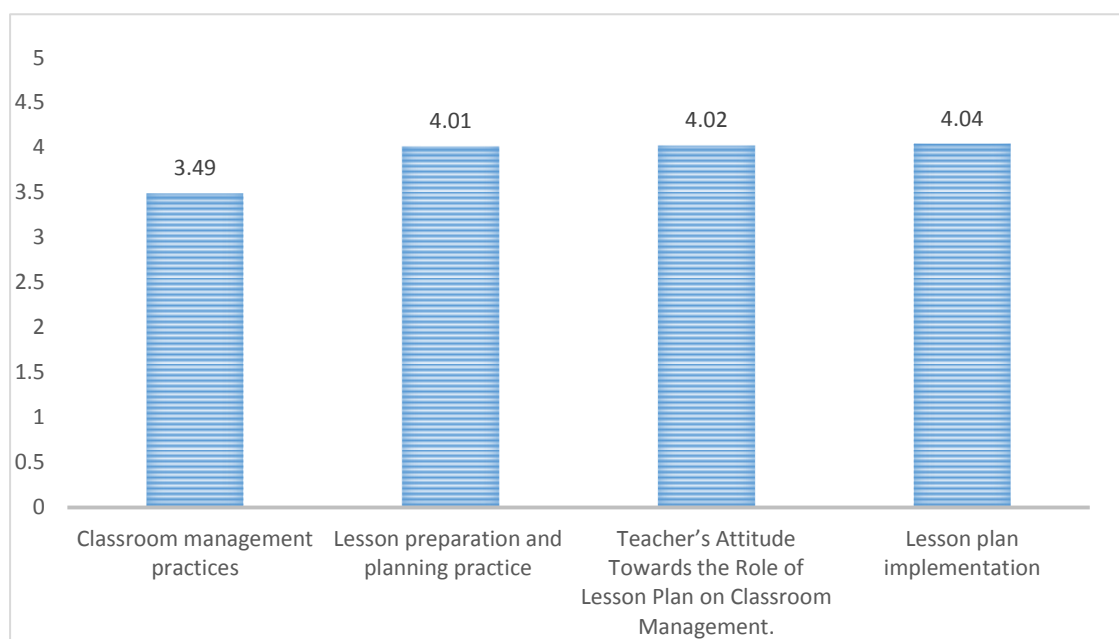


Figure 1. Means of the Study Axis

6. Discussion

From the results, it is deducible that most Saudi English teachers prepare lesson plans to facilitate effective classroom management. Also, most of them have a positive attitude toward the Role of Lesson Plans in Classroom Management and believe that it positively impacts their ability to manage occurrences within the classroom. Additionally, some educators use teaching aids, lesson notes, and teaching methods based on the specification of the plans created for the lessons.

English language teachers are encouraged to use detailed outlines in teaching various English skills. The relationship between developing a lesson plan and managing a classroom is important in creating a positive EFL classroom environment. Thus, lesson plan development and classroom management are the most important determinants of class outcomes. This is based on the understanding that teachers use lesson planning to set objectives, prepare activities, and have a precise timeline for achieving the intended learning goals (Singapore Management University, 2020).

Ali (2021) states that many educators do not meet their teaching goals because they do not appropriately plan or apply class management techniques. Education programs should be more integrated and comprehensive to enhance teachers' ability to undertake complex tasks associated with lesson planning and classroom management (Khan, 2020). Teachers' success in classroom management depends on their ability to develop and maintain healthy relationships with their learners. However, teachers cannot succeed in classroom management if they are unprepared (Moradi, 2019).

A lesson plan is a vital result of a lesson study (Fujii, 2019). The collaboration involving teaching in lesson plan development and implementation often goes unnoticed because it is the work one engages in before a lesson. It is because outsiders never witness such engagements apart from those involved. A case study by Tokyo Gakugei University in three Japanese schools revealed that the successful development of lesson plans is determined by task design and teachers' commitment to ensuring the process is based on evidence (Fujii, 2019). This is why lesson plans are often not transferable because the contexts and learning goals differ.

According to Vermunt et al. (2019), the possibility of lesson study impacting teachers' teaching practice is determined by the extent to which they are conversant with the meaning and application of each component. One needs to appreciate the importance of undertaking a lesson study and developing a lesson plan for them to effectively prepare for a lesson. It should not be taken as a mere formality. Lesson plan creation is impacted the learners' and teachers' mutual needs (Saito et al., 2018). Shared needs can only be met through elaborate and objective guidance during the lesson. The guidance should also be as evidence-based as possible.

There are specific traits that are associated with good lesson plans. According to Lynch and Warner (2008), a lesson plan should address the diversity and individual variances of the learners in a classroom. The learners' different cognitive and learning abilities in a classroom need to be acknowledged and incorporated into the plan. Marashi and Asggar (2019) asserted that classroom management strategies directly impact the possibility of anxiety during a lesson. Educators implement lesson plans effectively by mitigating the impact of inappropriate conduct on lesson outcomes (Lopes et al., 2017).

Teachers should not overlook the importance of lesson planning and management when implementing lessons (Nashruddin & Nurrachman, 2016). Planning is the first phase of the entire process (Othmane, 2015). Regardless of how skilled a teacher is in classroom management; they might fail in lesson implementation if they do not plan appropriately. Thus, when a teacher starts a lesson, they should have a plan on what needs to be done and the evidence backing each classroom management and teaching technique used. However, the plan should be implemented with utmost diligence for the intended goals and outcomes to be achieved at the end of the lesson (Ali, 2021).

7. Limitations

One limitation of the present study was the sole use of a questionnaire to collect data. Future studies should include additional observation tools to record data in further detail. Another

limitation was the study of English teachers from secondary schools; future studies should include teachers at elementary and intermediate schools, as well.

8. Recommendation

First, I recommend that Saudi Arabia's education ministry coordinate professional workshops to train both preservice and in-service Saudi EFL teachers in lesson planning, lesson plan implementation, and classroom management. In addition, I recommend that researchers continue to study this topic via a quasi-experimental design to determine the impact of lesson plans on classroom management and EFL students' academic outcomes.

9. Conclusion

In the present study, the researcher aimed to identify the EFL teachers' perceptions of the role of lesson planning in classroom management in EFL classrooms specifically in the Saudi context. The results indicated that most Saudi EFL teachers effectively plan lessons to cultivate classroom management. Moreover, most EFL teachers' attitudes toward the role of lesson planning in classroom management were positive, and they tend to use lesson plans to appropriately control their classroom environments. As such, English teachers should develop and implement an appropriate lesson plan to effectively teach EFL skills. In addition, I determined the presence of a significant positive correlation between lesson plan preparation and the successful management of a classroom to create a positive EFL learning environment.

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