

**Original Article**

## The Interrelationship among EFL Teachers' Smart Classroom Management, Their Students' Learning Approach, Positive Orientation, and Language Learning

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### Abstract

A successful teacher manages the classroom in a way to meet all the potential challenges. In effect, classroom management skills are the cornerstone of the whole process of successful teaching. This survey-based study assessed the interrelationship among EFL teachers' smart classroom management (SCM), their students' learning approach, positive orientation (PO), and language achievement (LA). SCM implies using different strategies including appropriate planning, organization, leadership, and control based on humanistic approaches to education. The population of the study consisted of about 307 Iranian university, institute, and public school students, out of which 279 were sampled. This study used the Persian forms of three questionnaires: Smart Classroom Management Questionnaire (SCMQ), Revised Study Process Questionnaire (R-SPQ-2F) measuring deep approach (D), surface approach (SA), and Positivity Scale (PS). The results obtained via Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) demonstrated that the expected model including the variables under study had a good fit with the data. The results demonstrated that EFL teachers' SCM positively and significantly influenced the three student-related factors: DA, LA, and PO. LA was positively predicted by DA, while SA had no significant influence on LA. PO positively and significantly impacted LA. It can also be concluded that LA is positively predicted by SCM via its influence on DA and PO. The major implication of the present study should inform teacher educators to incorporate SCM strategies in their programs.

**Keywords:** Deep Approach, Language Achievement, Learning Approach, Positive Orientation, Smart Classroom Management, Surface Approach

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## 1. Introduction

A successful teacher prepares the classroom to meet all the challenges. In fact, with optimal classroom management, the teacher provides the necessary conditions for learning. Therefore, classroom management skills are the cornerstone of the whole process of teaching successfully. One of the most important factors in the class is the term classroom management. Although the teachers do not choose their classrooms, they can select among different classroom management strategies, and they have the power to create an appropriate environment for teaching and learning (Ahmadi et al., 2019). Moreover, teachers create extra time for training, engage larger groups of students, and guide pupils to become self-monitored if they can create a successful classroom atmosphere (Mucherah & Frazier, 2013).

Additionally, by having good classroom management, teachers can establish and keep a positive learning environment. To maintain a classroom free from chaos, instructors should be able to manage the class effectively and alter the students' attitude in a positive way to make students more engaged and motivated, and preserve positive behavior (Ahmadi et al., 2019).

Previous studies have consistently reported that the person who has a key role in shaping successful education is a teacher (Hattie, 2009). In addition, teachers with low levels of classroom management cannot create a situation in which effective tutoring and learning can appear (Jones & Jones, 2012; Marzano et al., 2003). Effective classroom management approaches help and facilitate effective teaching and learning. Some authors have reported that effective classroom management is established on a positive classroom environment surrounding efficacious teacher-student connections (Wubbels et al., 1999).

All these explanations about the significant role of classroom management lead us to use smart classroom management (SCM). This term was offered for the first time by Linsin who is a pioneer researcher in SCM. As reported by Linsin (2013), SCM means using different strategies such as planning, organization, leadership, and control of learners. He believes that in SCM, the role of the teacher is to stick to a classroom management plan actively and designs a lovely classroom where learners enjoy being present every day.

SCM not only helps teachers to be more efficient but also promotes students' academic achievement in various dimensions (Linsin, 2013). It is clear that all the events that happen in

the classroom have a great effect on learners and if the classroom environment lacks appropriate management, we cannot expect outstanding achievements from the students. It has been found that teacher management styles improve learners' academic performance and achievement goals (Ahmadi et al., 2019), involve students in learning (Golestani, 2017), and influence their anxiety and engagement (Morshedian et al., 2023). Nonetheless, until recently, there has been no documented evidence of the interplay between teachers' SCM and students' approach to learning and their attitudes toward academic settings, and ultimately concerning all life experiences. Therefore, in the present study, we intended to empirically examine the dynamic interrelationship among teachers' SCM, students' learning approach, and their positive orientation (PO).

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Smart Classroom Management

Classroom management refers to the way different things perform in the class (Golestani, 2017). As Berliner (1988) cited, all those important activities which are necessary for creating positive conditions in learning constitute another meaning of classroom management. Teachers' ability to manage students appropriately is a vigorous factor in teachers' sense of professional identity (Lewis et al., 2008). One of the paramount issues that language instructors face while they teach is how to manage the classroom (Linse & Nunan, 2005). As Marzano and Marzano (2003) stated, it is obvious that instructors have many different roles in the classes that they teach; nevertheless, being a classroom manager is the more salient one. The new approach that is explained according to humanistic attitudes and mentions the teacher's appropriate use of management strategies (planning, organization, leadership, and control) is the term smart classroom management (Morshedian et al., 2023.). SCM emphasizes being conscious of students' psychological aspects to improve their engagement and language enhancement (Morshedian et al., 2023). As Linsin (2013) asserts, the teacher through smart classroom management tries to generate a suitable environment in the class that students love to be part of it and become excited to come to class every day cheerfully (Golestani, 2017).

According to the process-based view, smart management tasks are classified into four main skills: planning, organization, leadership, and control (Morshedian et al., 2023.). One of

the strategies within SCM is planning. If the planning step is settled skillfully, the teaching and learning process will be more effective. Planning is connected to goals and the implementation of goals. In the second place, the organization is another salient strategy that indicates arranging the time of the class, setting space, and a few physical arrangements regarding the light or seat of the students (Morshedian et al., 2023). The third strategy, leadership, is the dominant responsibility of teachers in controlling and managing the development in classrooms along with schools and is linked with learners' success (Tang & See, 2009). As Blum (2005) expressed, a good relationship between students and schools or instructors leads to high grades of educational success. Therefore, teachers need to have a great association with each individual in the class. Fourthly, control in a straightforward explanation is to organize activities to make sure they are realized as stated in the program (Morshedian et al., 2023). Here, the procedure contains rectifying any mistakes.

According to Cheng (1994), teachers are the leaders of the classroom and students are the followers. The main responsibility in managing the development in class is leadership (Tang & See, 2009). Teachers with high leadership potential can act as an advisor, counselors, facilitators, instructors, and curriculum experts to endorse class and school enhancements (Ahmadi et al., 2019). Control can be explained as a review of activities to confirm that they are done according to the goals and predictable plans (Rezaiefar, 2019).

Canter (1989) believes that there are two objectives concerning classroom management. The first one is to shape an extremely helpful learning condition and the second one is to supply a safe classroom; therefore, pupils' interests, motivations, and participation in the learning process will be maintained.

## **2.2. Learning Approach**

Many factors can affect good learning (Ghanizadeh & Allahdadi, 2015). The key element is adopting an appropriate learning method. There is a viewpoint called SAL (it stands for student approaches to learning) which comes from Europe and Australia for knowing the way how learners arrange their education assignments. SAL contains motive and also it has to do with a learning approach. The initial one means the reason for learning and the latter explains

everything they perform (Biggs et al., 2001). The approaches to learning have sensitivity to particular contexts and individual cogent aspects (e.g., program awareness, general understanding of learning) (Biggs et al., 2001); moreover, they have a compelling impact on learning results (Biggs et al., 2001).

Marton and Säljö (1976) were the first scholars who classified learning approaches into deep and surface ones. In the words of these scholars, deep learning stems from higher-order thinking skills. Students who choose the deep approach typically seek comprehension and learning but, students that selected surface strategies concentrate only on the important sections they think the teacher will ask.

Kember et al. (2004) have reported that learning methods consist of features of motivation and planned series of actions like selective memorizing, focusing on meaning, and managing time in the best way. The idea of learning approaches derives from the 3P model of learning and attainment, via which pupils study for particular purposes based on their perceptions of tasks. Two aspects shape students' approach to learning: deep and surface (Magno, 2009). The former is also called elaboration or critical thinking. The second is also recognized as rehearsal or memorization (Magno, 2009). Individuals with deep approach strategies challenge the correctness of data they have faced and try to mix new information with previous knowledge and experience (Magno, 2009).

This approach also gives learners insights to analyze the in-depth meaning of what is being studied (Magno, 2009). Quite the contrary, the repetitive rehearsal and rote memorization of data are the main features of the surface approach. Several research had the same perspective about the above-mentioned methods (ex. Bernardo, 2003; Biggs et al., 2001; Kember et al., 2004). Although the deeper strategies for learning demonstrate a facilitative role in academic achievement, prior research has not been consistent in this regard. As an example, Magno (2009) demonstrated in his work that LPQ (a measure for learning approaches) cannot be a reasonable gauge for low achieving students for the reason that deep motive and deep strategy are sometimes recognized as aspects of low achieving learners.

The deep learning approach encompasses strategies and motivation associated with the meta-cognitive domain (Son, 2004). Moreover, Berardi-Coletta et al. (1995) argued when the mentioned strategies are incorporated into teaching, learners' meta-cognition can be enhanced

to a greater degree. According to Leamson (2002), deep learning happens the time learners seek to learn the materials meaningfully, and when they try to explore new areas. To achieve this aim, not only the students ought to transfer what they learn to novel situations, but also adapt to new circumstances. Numerous studies have attempted to explain effective learning and its central role in teaching/learning interaction (e.g., Marton et al., 1997).

Evans et al. (2003) noted that a deep approach comprises extensive reading, reflecting on the reading, and establishing a connection with prior knowledge. That's why deeper approaches to learning tend to generate positive results for learning (Aplat, 2003). It can therefore be said that the deep approach is a combination of deep motive and deep strategy; in contrast, the surface approach encompasses surface motive and surface strategy (Biggs et al., 2001). In this study, it is presumed that teachers through SCM can exert influence on different aspects of students' learning process such as learning approaches.

### **2.3. Positive Orientation**

Teachers with appropriate application of smart classroom management motivate students and create an atmosphere in which students can gain good experiences and memories. Moreover, in these situations, students are respected and feel good about themselves and also about the learning process (Morshedian et al., 2023). Therefore, SCM can have a significant impact on the student's positive attitudes toward their life experiences; this tendency to react positively about various aspects of life is called positive orientation, positive thinking, or positivity. According to Caprara (2009), positive orientation is an overall tendency to positively perceive, to carry out an evaluation of numerous life aspects concerning the self, personal life, and personal future, and to react to life experiences.

Positive orientation is stemmed from attitudes. According to social psychology, attitude is a temperament either in relation to or opposed to a specific occurrence, individual, or thing (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). This argument offers two key features of manner that it is bipolar; positive or negative; and is an answer to a stimulus like an individual, object, or circumstances (Caprara, 2009). As a result of considerable attention in the theoretical and experimental improvement of positive psychology (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000), a positive attitude can shape one's destiny. A person with a positive attitude generally likes to

answer to life experiences and that is the meaning of positive orientation (Caprara, 2009). It is a ubiquitous method in which one encounters reality, reflects on experience, frames events and processes personal and interpersonal experiences over time and life circumstances.

positivity as a general concept, is a tendency ‘to think’ in a positive way about different life circumstances regarding the self, daily events, and future expectations (Caprara et al., 2012). The notion that is worthy to receive additional interest is the term positive orientation. It can be defined as “a basic disposition predisposing people to appraise life and experiences with a positive outlook” (Caprara et al., 2012, p. 702). Positive orientation has three dimensions, including life satisfaction, optimism, and self-esteem (Alessandri et al., 2012).

Self-esteem points to people’s overall self-regard, and how much they accept themselves (Alessandri et al., 2012). Life satisfaction points to human’s general estimation of their personal lives. Moreover, this term is considered a cognitive constituent of subjective well-being (Alessandri et al., 2012). Optimism, generated by the expectancy-value model (Alessandri et al., 2012), points to the expectations of people about their future. People with this kind of attitude believe in the occurrence of good things and hindering bad events in future (Scheier & Carver, 1993).

Our knowledge of SCM is based on very scarce empirical data. Accordingly, the main objective of this study was to inspect the effect of SCM on students’ learning approach, positive orientation, and language achievement. This research aims at finding answers to the following questions:

1. Does EFL teachers’ SCM have any significant impact on learners’ learning approach?
2. Does EFL teachers’ SCM have any significant impact on learners’ positive orientation?
3. Does EFL teachers’ SCM have a significant impact on learners’ language achievement?

### **3. Methodology**

To address the above research questions, a survey-based design was utilized to examine the hypothesized relationships. To examine the causal associations, SEM was employed. In the hypothesized model, SCM is the independent variable, the influence of which on three

dependent variables was investigated: learning approach, positive orientation, and language achievement. To collect data, relevant questionnaires were utilized.

### **3.1. Design and Context of the Study**

This study is quantitative, employing numerical data obtained from collected questionnaires. So, a survey type of research was selected to conduct the study. The data collection was carried out from November 2020 to March 2021 in some high schools, language institutes, and universities in five cities in Iran.

### **3.2. Participants**

The population of the study consisted of 300 EFL learners, out of which 279 were sampled. There were 279 EFL students, male and female, who were chosen based upon a convenience sampling among EFL students learning English in public high schools, language institutes, and universities that participated in the present research. The sample included 184 males and 123 females with the age range of 15 to 44. The universities and language institutes were in Mashhad and Bojnourd. The public schools were from five cities in Iran. They were Shahed-e-Nejabat, Shahed-e-Imam Hosein, Talash, Taleghani, Danesh, Nemooneh Shahid Beheshti in Bojnourd, North Khorasan province, some schools in Mashhad, Sarakhs, Kashmar in Khorasan Razavi province and Karaj, Alborz province.

They had different levels of degrees, including high school students, Bachelor of Arts (BA), and Master of Arts (MA). Convenience sampling was used due to the accessibility and features related to the purpose of the investigation. The following table portrays the demographic information of the participants. (Table 1)



**Table 1.**

*Demographic Background of the Participants*

No. of Students	279
Gender	123 Females & 184 Males
Native Language	Persian
Major	EFL
Setting	High school, Language institute, University
Cities	Bojnourd, Mashhad, Sarakhs, Kashmar, and Karaj
Academic Years	November 2020 to March 2021

**3.3. Instruments**

**3.3.1. Smart Classroom Management Questionnaire (SCMQ)**

The SCM questionnaire was designed and validated by Golestani (2017). The questionnaire items were developed based on Robin and Cenzo’s classroom management (1998) model. The validity and reliability of this questionnaire were obtained by using the three-dimensional approach. In this questionnaire, a three-dimensional approach which comprises the researcher, method, and technique was used.

The questionnaire includes 39 items on a scale from 1 (rarely) to 5 (very much) to indicate teachers’ SCM. The SMC scale has four subscales which are actions related to planning, organization, leadership, and control. The number of items for each dimension is as follows: planning (11 items), organizing (9 items), leadership (12 items), and control (7 items).

The Cronbach's alpha for every dimension ranged from .82 to .90. (Planning = .86, Organization= .91, Leadership= .90, Control= .87). All items had a factor loading above .30. The validity indices were all satisfactory: ( $\chi^2= 503.86$ ,  $df= 173$ , RMSEA=. 06, GFI= .92, CFI= .90, NFI= .90).

A sample item for each dimension is presented in the followings: Planning: ‘The instructor plans based upon students’ needs’; Organization: ‘The teacher gives opportunities to the students to indicate their satisfaction from rules’; Leadership: ‘The teacher identifies

student's conflict and problems quickly and intelligently', and Control: 'The teacher emphasizes the students' performance and scores fairly'.

### **3.3.2. Revised Study Process Questionnaire (R-SPQ-2F)**

This survey form was made and validated by Biggs et al., (2001). It has 20 items on a 5-point Likert scale varying from 1 (never true of me) to 5 (always true of me). Two major scales include Deep Approach (DA) and Surface Approach (SA), each comprising two subscales, Deep Motive (DM), Deep Strategies (DS), Surface Motive (SM), and Surface Strategies (SS).

The scale has a satisfactory Cronbach's alpha value. Cronbach's alpha value for each subscale estimated by the designers is as follows: DM= 0.62, DS= 0.63, SM=0.72, SS= 0.57. In this study, the Persian version of R-SPQ-2 validated by Ghanizadeh and Allahdadi (2015) was utilized. According to Ghanizadeh and Allahdadi (2015, this test has acceptable reliability in the EFL context, and it enjoys validity indices computed by CFA: chi-square/*df* ratio (2.50), the RMSEA (.073), and GFI (.90). The reliability of the translated version computed through Cronbach's alpha is: DM = .68, DS= .61, SM= .62, SS= .65

### **3.3.3. Positivity Scale (PS)**

This inventory was developed by Caprara et al., (2012). It has eight items, which were calibrated on a 5-point scale with the concepts: 'strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, or strongly disagree.' The sample items are as follows: "I have great faith in the future.", "Others are generally there for me when I need them". The total reliability of the questionnaire was reported as .76.

## **3.4. Data Collection Procedure**

Collecting the required data was initiated in November 2020 and lasted until March 2021. All the participants voluntarily responded to three different questionnaires comprising smart classroom management, learning approach, and positive orientation. To receive reliable data, the aim of filling in the questionnaire was explained. Due to the hazardous conditions of the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and the quarantine conditions in the country, the questionnaires were distributed and collected online through Google Forms link.

To collect reliable information, the researchers explained the reason for filling out the survey forms; in addition, the confidentiality of the responses was guaranteed. To acknowledge their kind cooperation, the participants were provided with some useful instructional videos, links, or sites. The questionnaire completion took about 20-30 minutes to complete. They were also asked to indicate age, education level, and their grade point average (GPA) on the questionnaires.

### 3.5. Data Analysis Procedure

To statistically analyze data, SPSS version 24 and Lisrel 8.5 statistical packages were utilized. First, descriptive statistics including means and standard deviations of each variable and its subscales were computed. The hypothesized model was examined through SEM, which scrutinizes the causal associations between independent and dependent variables. Finally, the correlations among the variables were computed via correlation coefficient. The reliability estimates were assessed via Cronbach's alpha.

## 4. Results

Table 2 displays descriptive statistics of SCM, learning approach (Deep and Surface), PO, and LA among the participants. As the table shows, the mean score for SCM is 138.78 and the maximum score is 195.00. For the Deep Approach, the mean is 34.48 and the maximum is 50.00. For the Surface Approach, the mean is 25.02 and the maximum is 49.00. For PO, the mean is 14.54 and the maximum is 40.00. For GPA the mean is 18.58 and the maximum is 20.00. Among the sub-scales of SCM, leadership ( $M=43.00$ ,  $SD=9.45$ ) and planning ( $M=38.55$ ,  $SD=8.54$ ) obtained the highest mean scores. (Table 2)

**Table 2.**

*Descriptive Statistics of SCM, DA, SA, PO, LA, and Their Subscales*

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Planning	11.00	55.00	38.55	8.54
Organization	9.00	45.00	31.97	7.49
Leadership	12.00	60.00	43.00	9.45
Control	7.00	35.00	25.36	6.19
SCM	39.00	195.00	138.78	29.28
Deep Motive	5.00	25.00	17.28	3.92
Deep Strategies	5.00	25.00	17.20	4.01
Deep Approach	10.00	50.00	34.48	7.51
Surface Motive	5.00	25.00	11.33	3.98
Surface Strategies	5.00	25.00	13.63	3.56
Surface Approach	10.00	49.00	25.02	6.79
PO	8.00	40.00	14.54	5.00
GPA	11.00	20.00	18.58	2.37

To probe if the hypothesized model fits the data, the LISREL 8.50 statistical package was used to run SEM. The acceptable criteria for fit indices are presented in Table 3. (Table 3)

**Table 3.**

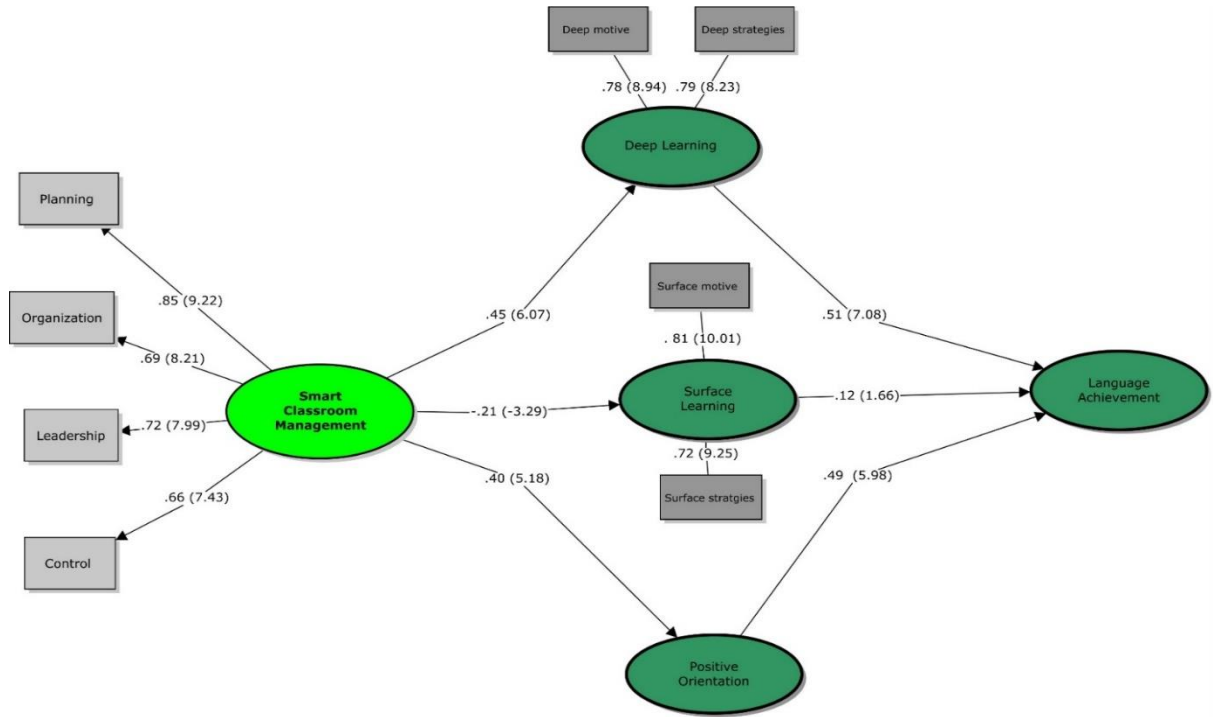
*Acceptable Criteria for Fit Indices*

Chi-square $\chi^2$	Not significant
Chi-square/ <i>df</i> ratio	$\leq 2$ or 3
RMSEA	< .06 or .08
CFI	$\geq .90\%$ or 95%
NFI	$\geq .90\%$ or 95%
GFI	$\geq .90\%$ or 95%

As shown by Figure 2, the chi-square value (225.01), the chi-square/*df* ratio (3), the RMSEA (.069), and the GFI (.90) all reached the acceptable fit thresholds. It implies that the model had a good fit with the empirical data. (Figure 1)

**Figure 1.**

*The Schematic Representation of the Variables Under Study*



$\chi^2 = 225.01$ ,  $df = 75$ ,  $RMSEA = .069$ ,  $GFI = .90$ ,  $NFI = .89$ ,  $CFI = .88$

To check the strengths of associations, the  $t$ -values, and standardized estimates, which are typically displayed on the paths, were examined. The results revealed that EFL instructors' SCM positively and significantly influenced the three student-related factors: SCM and DA ( $\beta = 0.45$ ,  $t = 6.07$ ), SCM and SA ( $\beta = -0.21$ ,  $t = -3.29$ ), SCM and PO ( $\beta = 0.40$ ,  $t = 5.18$ ). LA was positively predicted by DA ( $\beta = 0.51$ ,  $t = 7.08$ ), while SA had no significant influence on LA. PO positively and significantly impacted LA ( $\beta = 0.49$ ,  $t = 5.98$ ). It can also be concluded that LA is positively predicted by SCM via its influence on DA and PO. For ease of representation, the above paths are displayed in the following table as well. (Table 4)

**Table 4**

*The Represented Path of the Model*

Path	$\beta$ Value (Direct effect)
SCM→ DA	.45
SCM→ SA	-.21
SCM → PO	.40
DA → LA	.51
SA → LA	.12
PO→ LA	.49

The correlation coefficients among EFL teachers' SCM, students' learning approach, positive orientation, and language achievement are presented in Table 5. (Table 5)

**Table 5**

*The Correlation Coefficients Among Teachers' SCMS, DA, SA, PO, and LA*

	1	2	3	4	5
1. DA	1.00				
2. SA	-.21**	1.00			
3. PO	.39**	.33**	1.00		
4. LA	.59**	.18*	.56**	1.00	
5. SCM	.66**	-.30**	.59**	.45**	1.00

\*\*Correlation is significant at the level of 0.05

As can be seen, SCM is positively associated with DA ( $r = 0.66$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), and negatively and weakly with SA ( $r = -0.30$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). SM also positively correlated with PO ( $r = 0.59$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) and IP ( $r = 0.45$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ).

## 5. Discussion

As already stated, the major purpose of the present article was to inspect the role of EFL teachers' smart classroom management in their students' learning approach, positive orientation, and language learning. Education is a very delicate and sensitive endeavor that can only be done with efficiency and professionalism and accurate knowledge of the issues and process of education because it requires special knowledge, awareness, and skills. For this purpose, the teacher must be constantly seeking to maintain and increase his or her efficiency and success in teaching, vigorously following the dynamism and developments related to their profession, and improving their knowledge, skills, and information according to the progress of science and technology in various fields. From the teacher's point of view, the issue of classroom management is always considered one of the most complex and difficult issues. Likewise, students' parents consider the existence of discipline in the classroom to be very important and valuable. In this regard, there are related studies that maintain what enhances students' academic success is the management techniques performed by the teacher (Adeyemo, 2012).

In another study, Rahimi and Asadollahi (2012) stated that teachers' management techniques involve students in learning. In 2013, Mucherah and Frazier published a paper in which they described teachers who have the talent to generate a productive classroom environment, capable of involving students more in the learning process, providing more time for learning, and helping students learn self-management skills. Moreover, a collaborative classroom environment with good teacher-student is vital for effective learning (Walters & Frei, 2007).

The teacher as a principal must be able to apply a set of plans, strategies, and actions in the classroom in such a way that his or her training reaches maximum efficiency and effectiveness. The existence of discipline and regulation in the classroom helps to maintain the mental health of the teacher and students. In addition, the teacher must be able to manage the classroom properly while teaching, communicate easily with his or her students, and keep them constantly happy, fresh, and ready to learn by providing very engaging, informative, and useful experiences (Morshedian et al., 2023).



SCM techniques and effective communication with students are a part that needs constant updating and is very necessary because the new generation is typically encountered more distractions than the previous one. To be able to communicate more effectively with the new generation's mentality and get closer to them, we must come up with new ideas to make education attractive to them. Students need to feel a sense of belonging and comfort in the class to pay attention to the content carefully.

The techniques in SCM are essential to attract students, and teachers must work hard to be able to transfer knowledge to students more effectively. Nonetheless, it appears that in Iran, these types of SCM techniques are to a large extent unknown in institutions, especially schools, and not commonly practiced there (Golestani, 2017). Although the significance of classroom management strategies and the role of teachers in learners' achievement is frequently voiced, we must recognize the contribution of SCM for EFL teachers as an important approach to teaching. In the following section, the research questions and the corresponding null hypotheses are articulated once more and the findings associated with each research question are discussed successively:

Research Question 1: Does EFL teachers' SCM have any significant impact on learners' learning approach?

Research Hypothesis 1: EFL teachers' SCM does not have any significant impact on learners' learning approach.

The outcomes did not confirm this hypothesis. The results of SEM and correlation demonstrated that EFL teachers' SCM positively and significantly ( $\beta=0.45$ ,  $t= 6.07$ ) influenced student's learning approach. In other words, EFL teacher's SCM played a significant role in student's learning approach (deep approach).

Viewing from a common sense perspective, the attributes of the four concepts (planning, organization, leadership, and control) in SCM should have a great impact on students' learning approaches. For instance, in the first concept, planning, teachers try to define the needed steps, lessen the effects of changes, avoid time-consuming and additional tasks, and set standards for relaxed control to have an effective classroom management plan (Morshedian et al., 2023). Additionally, in planning, teachers use different teaching aids, have clear rules in the class, use up-to-date topics, and determine the class schedule based on the students' needs (Linsin,

2013). All these strategies normally would help deep learning, challenge students, make students responsible for their learning, and change students' approach from surface to deep.

The kind of approach that students adopt while learning has a great impact on their progress and achievement; also, learning approaches can determine the quality and quantity of learning in pupils (Ghanizadeh & Allahdadi, 2015). Typically, deciding what approach students should take to their learning depends greatly on the objectives of the course they are studying (Ghanizadeh & Allahdadi, 2015). As already stated, learning approaches are classified into two categories: deep and surface. One of the characteristics of students who choose the deep approach is that they are constantly committed to seeking meaning, while learners who choose a rehearsal approach concentrate more on remembering what may be asked on the exam (Marton & Saljo, 1976).

Research Question 2: Does EFL teachers' SCM have any significant impact on learners' positive orientation?

Research Hypothesis 2: EFL teachers' SCM does not have any significant impact on learners' positive orientation.

The results did not confirm this hypothesis. The results of SEM and correlation demonstrated that EFL teachers' SCM positively and significantly ( $\beta=0.40$ ,  $t= 5.18$ ) influenced student's positive orientation. In other words, EFL teacher's smart classroom management played a significant role in student's positive orientation.

If the SCM strategies are implemented well in the classroom, the effect of them on students' positive orientation will be very significant. One of the SCM strategies is organization. In this part, teachers follow their responsibilities, organize tasks into different parts, give authority, and arrange resources (Morshedian et al., 2023). Teachers' effort in the organization step is to recognize the spirits and personalities of students and also create a sense of trust, acceptance, patience, and cooperation that leads to an increase in the students' self-confidence, motivation, self-esteem, and ultimately positivity.

Positive orientation means having a general tendency to have a positive understanding of life and to evaluate many aspects of life that are relevant to oneself, personal life, and personal future, as well as to react to different experiences in life (Caprara, 2009). So, as can be seen,

SCM with its focus on promoting students' attachment and favorable outlook to the classroom would eventually result in positive orientation in students.

Research Question 3: Does EFL teachers' SCM have any significant impact on learners' language achievement?

Research Hypothesis 3: EFL teachers' SCM does not have any significant impact on students' language achievement.

The results did not confirm this hypothesis. The results of SEM and correlation demonstrated that EFL teachers' SCM positively and significantly ( $\beta=0.49$ ,  $t= 5.98$ ) influenced students' language achievement. In other words, EFL teachers' smart classroom management played a positive role in students' language achievement.

Linsin (2013) noted classroom management encompasses all circumstances and activities which are conducive to effective learning and emotional attachment. As prior studies demonstrated, teachers' mastery in classroom management has enormous influences on learners' achievement. Klem and Connell (2004) argued that there is strong experimental support for the correlation between learners' educational achievement and instructors' managing skills. The four strategies of SCM play significant roles in students' achievement. For instance, in the control techniques, teachers emphasize students' performance in the class more than their grades and this action leads students to care more about their lessons and learning.

The current finding is also consistent with a recent experimental study conducted by Morshedian et al. (2023.) It demonstrated that using SCM strategies as a treatment, that was prepared based on students' needs and a humanistic approach, had a significant impact on learners' engagement and its subscales (cognitive, emotional, and behavioral) up to 46%. Moreover, applying SCM was influential in reducing students' L2 anxiety and enhancing language achievement.

## 6. Conclusion

The current study examined the role of EFL teachers' smart classroom management in their students' learning approach, positive orientation, and language learning. Classroom management implies having clear and transparent rules for organizing the classroom,

preparing the class schedule and the necessary educational materials and activities, and explaining the class instructions to the students and the consequences of not following them (Ahmadi et al., 2019). How teachers treat their students has a great impact on their teaching and learning, because the classroom is the place where the closest interactions between teachers and students take place (Ahmadi et al., 2019).

The outcomes of this research were in line with prior studies and presented that applying SCM has been influential in different aspects of students' learning. According to the findings of the present research, creating a safe, intimate, facilitative, and stress-free environment due to the teacher's use of SCM strategies (planning, organization, leadership, and control), promotes positive attitudes and encourages deep approaches to learning.

As the major implication of the present research, teacher educators should familiarize teachers with the SCM strategies from the very beginning and equip teachers with these techniques and create the necessary conditions and facilities for its implementation. In so doing, we would encounter less disengagement of students towards lessons, fewer misbehaviors, and less emotionally detrimental behaviors, and ultimately higher levels of effective learning would be yielded. Certainly, the Ministry of Education can play an important role in the implementation of SCM strategies by supporting it financially and setting up training classes for teachers.

This study can be replicated with students of different ages, with higher randomization, in more schools, institutions, and universities. Moreover, a cross-comparison between young learners and adult learners can be made in future studies. It can also be investigated whether and how SCM strategies differ in various contexts and settings. The association of SCM with other psychological and social variables can be studied in future research.

Some limitations permeated the present study. The first one can be related to the sample size and its representativeness. The sample was selected from five cities in Iran, so it might not fully represent all Iranian EFL learners. Another limitation revolves around the method of data collection, which was constrained to survey collection. Hence, in future research, qualitative or content-based analyses could be conducted to complement the results.

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