

Exploring the Relationship Between the Age of Newly Recruited Algerian EFL Primary School Teachers and Stress in Classroom Management: Ten Newly Recruited Teachers in Djelfa- Algeria

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Abstract

Teaching young learners at primary schools is taxing even for most experienced teachers as teaching takes a toll on both the body and the mind. From this respect, the study aims to explore the potential relationship between two variables: age at the time of recruitment and stress in classroom management. Hence the work attempts to answer two questions. The first one discusses how the age of newly recruited EFL primary school teachers in Algeria correlates with their stress level and classroom management skills. The second ponders on whether professional development programs are tailored to address age-related considerations. In longitudinal research that extends over an eighteen-month period, the study utilized the mixed-method approach relying on two data collection tools: a questionnaire and interviews with triangulation in mind. The results indicate that a teacher being recruited at an older age, thirty or more (in the context of this research), can struggle with classroom management, energy levels, stress, and even their ability to relate to learners of various age groups. Furthermore, teacher training does not incorporate any discussion on the potential impact of a teacher's age on classroom management, focusing instead on universal strategies that are deemed to fit all teachers.

Keywords; Age, English teaching, Primary Schools, Stress, Teacher.

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Introduction

The unique challenges in an EFL primary classroom arise from the playful nature, short attention span, varied developmental levels, high energy, and limited communication skills of young learners. All of these contribute to teachers' complexities in establishing an orderly and organized classroom structure (Donald et al., 2007). Consequently, and particularly in such a context, success in the teaching-learning process hinges on the skills of teachers to provide a safe, motivating, and challenging learning environment, while at the same time showing resilience, staying calm, and maintaining composure, hence avoiding stress (Evertson & Weinstein, 2006). Such aspects are intricately linked to the characteristics of the teacher (Goebel & Cashen, 1979). This paper focuses on the age of newly recruited teachers as a criterion that has a potential influence on their abilities to manage primary EFL classrooms effectively focusing primarily on stress as a critical factor. On the matter, Rahida Aini et al (2018) report the inconsistencies found in the literature. For instance, a large body of corpus associates age and teachers' maturity with better classroom management and learning outcomes (Gage, 2009; Griffith et al., 1999; Martin, 2009; Peters & CEE Commission on Research in Teacher Effectiveness, 1987; Tomlinson, n.d.; Zapata et al., 2016). Still, there are also conflicting views, for example, Alufohai & Ibhafidon (2015) concluded that learners taught by young teachers aged between 21 and 34 produced higher scores than those studied under teachers who are 49 or older.

The current research aims to address this gap in the literature however it also sheds light on an area researchers avoid mostly on the moral ground which is the association of the age factor with the time of recruitment of teachers. The researcher is aware of such an issue. Still, the work aims to objectively investigate how age can affect classroom management to yield recommendations for teachers and teacher-trainers. The study takes place in Algeria which has witnessed the recruitment of a large number of teachers in 2022 to teach English in primary schools. The current investigation extends over two academic years 2022/2023, and 2023/2024 with these questions in mind:

- 1- How does the age of newly recruited EFL primary school teachers in Algeria correlate with their stress level and classroom management skills?
- 2- Are professional development programs tailored to address age-related considerations?

1. Literature Review

1.1. Classroom Management Before Learning

Achieving success in the learning process in an EFL primary class rests heavily on the instructor's performance in creating a positive classroom atmosphere, establishing healthy relationships, and minimizing counterproductive time and behavior. At the same time, there is a need to achieve effective and efficient instruction, hence effective classroom management is a must (Gage, 2009). However, despite their inherent interconnectedness, the latter is frequently approached independently of the teaching-learning process. Johnson and Brooks (1979), on this matter, attest that while the two can be conceptually distinguished, they are tightly linked in practice, with one unable to function effectively without the other, if not at all.

Teaching young learners is a complex task that extends beyond mere classroom management. It involves nurturing children's mental and physical growth by attentively considering their needs, interests, and development (Hue & Li, 2008). Donald et al., (2007) emphasize the pivotal role of teachers during primary school years. Their influence can either pave the way for young

learners' success or, unfortunately, set a precedent for continual failure. Therefore, effective classroom management is of utmost importance, particularly in the context of primary education. Discussing classroom management ultimately centers more on teachers than on learners or the learning process itself.

Kauffman et al., (1995) see that incorporating learners' behavior and emotions into the learning process poses a significant challenge and can tax even the most proficient teachers, not to mention those who are newly recruited. The seriousness of the situation, however, is not reflected in teachers' training whether pre-service or in-service. According to Jones (2013), the field of classroom management as a subject matter does not take an adequate time first in university programs. For instance, Stewart-Wells (2000) states that in California, classroom management content is not mandatory for students to complete as part of their graduation requirements. She adds that the teaching of classroom management depends on the teacher educators and there is no consistency in what teachers receive in the training.

1.2. Understanding Teacher Stress

There is no question that teaching is demanding both mentally and physically, largely because it is stressful. The need to manage classes successfully, the workload and time pressure, professional expectations, lack of resources, and the emotional demands, are all reasons that can render the job of a teacher overwhelming and challenging. Any failure by the teacher to manage these aspects effectively will result in an inability to maintain a productive classroom environment, potentially leading to interruptions in the teaching and learning process, increased stress, or even burnout in extreme cases (Lewis, 2008).

Teachers may experience stress and burnout in a variety of ways, primarily classified as physical or emotional symptoms. The former may begin as weariness and exhaustion and can escalate to headaches, migraines, insomnia, or irregular sleep patterns (Mammadova, 2022). These physical manifestations can subsequently evolve into emotional issues, including anxiety, depression, irritability, and feelings of helplessness. The resultant emotional distress can have enduring effects, compromising personal well-being, diminishing professional efficacy, disrupting classroom dynamics, and adversely affecting learning outcomes and overall educational quality (Wharton, 1999). Ultimately, these factors can take a toll on the job itself, leading to decreased motivation and job satisfaction, as well as increased absenteeism and lateness.

1.3. Teachers' Age and Classroom Management

The study on classroom management endeavors to discern the intricate correlations among various factors, including teachers' characteristics and behavior, the dynamics of the teaching/learning process, the contextual environment, and learners' behavior and performance. Consequently, this research grapples with a multitude of interconnected variables, making it a complex and comprehensive exploration. The same goes for isolating one variable from the rest although for the sake of research, it is inevitable. This paper delves into the intricacies of the age variable, a crucial component among the presage variables in educational research, as highlighted by Gettinger and Kohler (2013). The presage variables encompass an array of characteristics, including sex, social class, training experiences, attitudes, beliefs, expectations, and abilities, all of which teachers and students bring into the teaching-learning dynamic. Despite an exhaustive exploration of the existing literature, little novel research has emerged on this particular subject, at least within the scope of the corpus examined for this article. The

observation aligns with Gettinger and Kohler's assertion that "This line of research diminished in the late 1960s and gave way to new approaches to the study of teaching" (p. 74).

The discussion of age as a criterion in literature is notably limited for three primary reasons. Firstly, there exists a significant ethical concern surrounding discrimination when addressing the intersection of age and recruitment (Wu & Sun, 2021). In this context, legislation advocates for the employment of older individuals based on their abilities rather than age, aiming to prohibit arbitrary age limits and other practices that unfairly disadvantage older workers (Rothenberg & Gardner, 2011). Second, the inconsistencies found in the results about the relationship between age and classroom management. Alufohai & Ibhafidon's work (2015) on whether teachers' Age and experience can influence teachers is consistent with some prior research indicating the positive impact of age and experience on teacher effectiveness. However, there are also contrasting findings from other studies suggesting that years of teaching experience may not necessarily determine teaching effectiveness in all cases. Thirdly, the discussion about age at the time of recruitment and its impact on classroom management appears to be an abandoned topic, constituting a clear gap in the literature.

1.4. Primary EFL Teachers Recruitment in Algeria

On June 19, 2022, President of the Republic of Algeria, Abdelmadjid Tebboune declared the introduction of English language teaching in primary schools, starting from the third grade, a policy that came into effect in September 2022. The rapid implementation of this decision raised various concerns and challenges, hence provoking strident criticism on issues such as inadequacy of textbooks and resources, unclear syllabus, and most relevant to this paper the shortage of qualified teachers. In regard to the latter, 5000 new teachers have been recruited and who had no experience in teaching this type of classes because simply it is unprecedented in Algeria (Boukhlef, 2022).

The decision to start the teaching of English in primary schools also was accompanied by the direction of the establishment of a new academic program within higher education. The program is specifically designed to provide the training needed for teachers specializing in English teaching at the primary school level. (Hana Saada, 2022). Nevertheless, teachers hired in 2022 or 2023 were provided with a mere two weeks of pre-service training and an additional two weeks of in-service training. The timeframe is scarcely adequate for teachers to effectively address the challenges they may face in the classroom.

The Ministry of National Education (MNE) has adopted a contract-based recruitment method for teachers, which is guided by four key criteria aimed at ensuring a fair selection process. The initial priority is given to candidates residing within the municipality, provided there are applicants. This approach is designed to minimize teacher mobility and address potential issues related to accommodation. The second level of priority is accorded based on the length of service as a contract teacher. This acknowledges the valuable contributions and experience these educators bring to the learning environment. In situations where candidates have similar credentials, preference is given to those with senior qualifications, emphasizing the significance of expertise in the selection process. If there are candidates who share similar results at this level, marks obtained during university classes will be taken into consideration.

2. Methodology

The study aims to explore the potential relationship between two variables: age at the time of recruitment and stress in classroom management. While age can be quantified numerically, utilizing a short survey can offer initial insights. However, the complexity deepens when

considering psychological age, which encompasses factors beyond chronological years. Involving psychological age adds depth to the analysis, recognizing that individuals' perceptions, experiences, and developmental stages play crucial roles in shaping their approach to classroom management. On the other hand, the concept of classroom management is hard to quantify since it is context-dependent with the involvement of a wide spectrum of strategies, principles, and techniques, as well as the direct influence of the teacher. Consequently, the two variables require insight from the practices of teachers inside the classroom over a period of time. Hence, there is a need for longitudinal research in which the researcher collects data from participants repeatedly over time to analyze the long-term effects of age on the time of recruitment on classroom management. In this study, the mixed-method approach will be employed integrating qualitative data, which offers depth and context, with quantitative data, which provides statistical rigor and generalizability.

For the aim to achieve a comprehensive understanding of how the ages of newly recruited teachers relate to stress and classroom management, the research employs two data collection tools with result triangulation in mind. The first tool involves conducting frequent interviews with teachers over an eighteen-month period, providing qualitative and quantitative insights into their experiences in the classroom. The second tool is a questionnaire administered exclusively to primary school teachers of English, designed to gather quantitative data on their classroom management practices and the challenges they face. The original plan included long-term in-class observations to gain direct insights into the interplay between the classroom dynamic and teachers' behavior. However, it was ultimately dropped due to the inability to secure sufficient permissions. Despite this, the combined use of interviews and questionnaires ensures a robust and multi-faceted approach to understanding the impact of teachers' ages on their stress levels and classroom management techniques.

2.1. Interviews

Most of the data required to answer research questions are personal and rather difficult to divulge in a single interview as trust is needed. Hence, the choice of interviews is grounded in their ability to elicit detailed, personal insights and adapt dynamically to the conversation, which are all necessary to obtain data about teachers' behavior in the classroom. The frequency is also an important factor by which the research tries to establish trust with the teacher to ensure candidness and reliability in the responses, thereby enhancing the overall quality and depth of the collected data. The interviews are all semi-structured and designed with the idea of a gradual increase in personal questions, allowing for a more comprehensive and academically rigorous understanding of the subject. Consequently, only in the third or fourth interview does the researcher begin to ask sensitive questions.

In the first interview, teachers are asked about their experience starting their career and general questions on their educational career, previous work, difficulties with learners, and administration. For the first two interviews, the aim is to establish trust more than to elicit answers. By the third interview, after ensuring a solid foundation of trust and understanding has been built with the teachers, questions on age at the time of recruitment, the rate of absences, classroom management strategies, and stress level, can be asked. The extended period of research also allows the researcher to observe teachers' behavior and demeanor. Hence, questions are altered in accordance with changes in teachers' appearances during the interviews, their emotional reaction, and even the way they dress. The methodology aims to provide insights into the relationship between teacher behavior and stress in classroom

management. A total of eighty-one interviews were conducted with teachers, each varying in length. Some interviews were as brief as 10 minutes, while others extended beyond 40 minutes.

2.1.1. Interviewees

The sample required for this research must be balanced between young teachers aged 22 to 35 and more senior teachers aged over 40. However, obtaining such a sample is challenging due to the limited number of willing participants. Consequently, the final sample, while it is not reflective of the researcher's initial intent, ultimately represents the available participants. Table 1 reveals that ten teachers participated in the interviews, selected from a pool of 14 who expressed willingness to participate. The selection was primarily based on availability for interviews and to avoid age redundancy. Nevertheless, the senior teacher category is underrepresented in the study's sample. Table 1 presents data on ten teachers, detailing their gender, age, and the number of interviews conducted with each. Among the teachers, there is a higher representation of females (70%) compared to males (30%). The ages of the teachers range from 24 to 46 years. The distribution of interviews is relatively varied, with the number of interviews conducted ranging from 1 to 6. The highest number of interviews (6) is associated with the oldest female teacher (age 46) and another female teacher aged 40, accounting for 20% of the teachers each. In contrast, the lowest number of interviews (1) is recorded for a female teacher aged 32, representing 10% of the sample. Overall, the data does not show a clear pattern linking age or gender to the number of interviews conducted.

Table 1: Age Distribution of Participating Teachers and Interview Details

Teacher	Gender	Age	Interviews
1	F	24	3
2	F	29	4
3	F	30	2
4	M	30	2
5	F	32	1
6	F	33	4
7	M	38	5
8	F	40	6
9	M	40	5
10	F	46	6

2.2. Questionnaire

Questionnaires have two key advantages needed for the current research: access to a wide population and anonymity. Although frequent interviews can help gain insight, a large population is still needed to draw a comprehensive conclusion. Second, given the nature of the questions asked about age and stress in classroom management, a questionnaire provides safety and comfort for respondents, encouraging honest and candid responses without the pressure of face-to-face interactions. The questionnaire was distributed via Facebook Groups to maximize the number of respondents. The number of participants reached 131 with 75.6 females and 24.4 males. Figure 1 and Table 2 show that the ages of the teachers range widely, with the largest age group being 35-40 years, followed by the 30-35 years and 26-30 years groups. The smallest

age groups are the youngest (22-25 years) and the oldest (50 years and above), indicating fewer entrants at the very early and late stages of their careers.

Figure 1: Age Distribution of the Questionnaire Participants

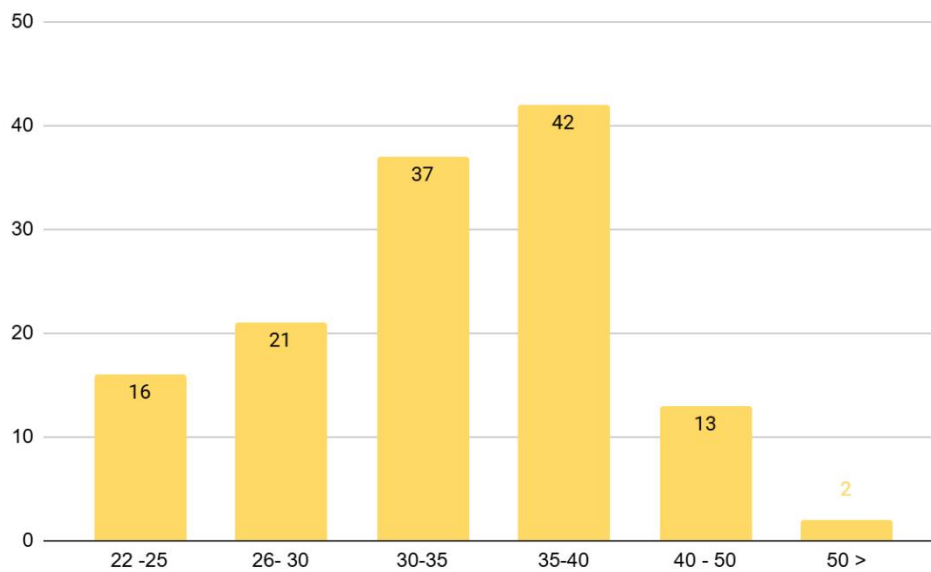


Table 2: Age and Gender Distribution of Participating Teachers

Age Category	Participants	Females	Males
22-25	16	11	5
26-30	21	17	4
31-35	37	27	10
36-40	42	34	8
41-49	13	9	4
50 >=	2	1	1
Total	131	99	32

2.2.1. The Questionnaire Questions

The questionnaire is designed to gather data on the correlation between the challenges faced by primary school teachers, their classroom management, and stress levels. It focuses on various issues such as classroom management, lesson planning, student engagement, adapting teaching methods, time management, building relationships, classroom discipline, assessment and feedback, incorporating technology, professional development, work-life balance, inclusive teaching, adapting to diverse learners, handling parental involvement, and coping with stress. However, questionnaires often suffer from the fatigue effect, where respondents become tired and less attentive as they progress, potentially compromising data quality. Therefore, it is crucial to limit the number of questions and ensure they are clear and concise. To address this, the research includes a broad spectrum of potential difficulties to prompt comprehensive responses from participants.

2.3. *Data Analysis and Procedures*

An essential aspect of this work is the triangulation of data. Therefore, results from interviews and questionnaires must be cross-referenced to ensure the validity and reliability of the findings. The employed approach provides a comprehensive understanding of how the age of newly recruited EFL primary school teachers impacts classroom management by corroborating evidence from multiple sources. First, the interviews will be transcribed and analyzed using thematic and narrative examination to identify patterns and relationships within the qualitative data. Both data collection tools will focus on portraying teachers' experiences with classroom management in relation to their age. For the results from the questionnaires, a direct comparison will be made with the interview findings, ensuring a thorough and nuanced interpretation of the data.

3. Results Analysis

3.1. *Interview Results*

Interviews have generated a vast amount of valuable data. However, the collected data needs filtering, as not all of it is significant for the research. While teachers were very expressive and eager to talk, their responses were not always about stress and classroom management. Therefore, only the questions directly related to the topic are discussed in the results, categorized into major themes and key points highlighted by the teachers. These responses are categorized into major themes and key points as highlighted by the teachers. The first step involves listing all stressors identified by the teachers and examining their coping strategies.

3.1.1. *Multiple School Assignment*

The first important question was, "What are the reasons behind stress in your work?" In this regard, there is a consensus among the interviewees, who all identified "work conditions" as the primary source of stress. Since primary school teachers of English are assigned to teach a forty-five-minutes session per level, they are required to work in more than one school, causing them to move frequently, which is time-consuming and logistically challenging. Additionally, factors such as the distance between schools and the diverse needs of learners contribute significantly to the workload, resulting in additional documentation and teaching responsibilities.

Interviewee 2 remarked on this issue, saying, 'I feel like I'm always on the run, which has made me constantly nervous.' Similarly, Interviewees 7, 8, and 10 expressed deeper concerns, noting that the demanding work conditions have severely impacted their health, leading to increased absences. All the interviewees mentioned that they did not anticipate such physically demanding tasks as part of their roles.

After more than one-year, frequent interviews revealed that coping with the particular problem was easier for interviewees 1-5. However, participants 5 and 7 often appeared weary during interviews and exhibited signs of decreased motivation. Additionally, the interviews have become longer, as interviewee 8 expressed a need to discuss the entire situation, which made her feel relieved.

3.1.2. Handling Young Learners

Another common point among the interviewees was the challenge of handling young learners. Despite their teaching experience being a key factor in their recruitment, the interviewees emphasized that dealing with young learners was not what they had expected. The sheer number of learners per class and the lack of pre-service training for managing children make the work particularly difficult. Interviewee 3 highlighted this issue, noting that while six years of experience teaching in secondary school helped secure the job, it was insufficient preparation for teaching young children.

Interviewees 5 to 10 stated that having families and children of their own adds to their stress levels at work. When asked if their experience with their own kids has been helpful, Interviewee 6 responded, "Dealing with my kids is one thing, but to teach, nurse, and care for more than 90 kids is entirely something else." Interviewee 10 further asserted that she is considering quitting her job due to constant absences and stress in class. She added, "The noise has become unbearable to me."

By the end of the second academic year of their employment, interviewees insisted that the problem had worsened. Interviewee 1 stated, "I am considering seeing a psychologist, and if I marry, I might stop working and continue my education to become a PhD student." Interviewee 10 has not quit her job but has submitted a request for long-term leave. She stated, "I am losing control in class and at home." When asked about the types of problems in the classroom, she said, "I find myself shouting at my learners and often hurting myself in the process."

3.1.3. Parental Involvement

All participants agreed that a major source of stress in their work is the involvement of parents. Interviewee 3 stated, "All parents have some unrealistic expectations of me. I am not paid to be a mother." Others echoed similar sentiments, adding that parents often criticize their work, making them feel undervalued and stressed. Interviewees 6 and 7 also mentioned that the active involvement of parents added extra workload, as they were required to stay longer hours for meetings.

Interviewee 7 offered another perspective: "I often deal with emotional and even confrontational parents who are always unsatisfied, either with their kids or with me as a teacher. This has impacted my job satisfaction and, even worse, affected my relationships with my learners. All the stress I have with their parents has made me frustrated with them too."

Interviewees 1 to 5 seemed particularly affected by this issue. They emphasized that, in their lifetimes, they had never encountered people as challenging as some parents. These interactions were often fraught with anger. Even when they tried to be accommodating, conflicts still arose, particularly regarding differing opinions on how their children should be taught. In this vein, Participant 1 recounted an instance where she lost her composure during a meeting and had to leave. This incident created numerous unseen problems at work.

3.1.4. Classroom Management

The interviews on classroom management explored various aspects, including how teachers establish rules and set expectations, foster a positive environment, monitor and respond to student behavior, engage with learners, and build relationships with young children. The responses from the interviewees varied significantly. Interviewees 1 through 4 asserted that they

had no issues with establishing rules and even felt they had exceeded their own expectations, including managing learners' behavior. Conversely, Interviewees 7, 8, and 9 found classroom management to be a nightmare. Participant 7 expressed, "I feel like I am losing my mind; the noise is just too much."

Interviewee 10 further added, "I have failed to build a good relationship with learners. Day by day, I feel this is not my job." Interviewee 9 shared a similar sentiment. He stated that "I have constant issue with the administration, making me do not want to attend and I feel that I have to change at least the school". Interviews all have mentioned that administrative issues often disrupt their work and classroom management.

3.1.5. Teachers' Age

Age is a sensitive topic to present. Therefore, the researcher decided to postpone asking about it until a strong rapport had been established with the interviewees. The participants' reactions to the topic can be divided into two groups. Interviewees 1, 2, and 3 viewed their young age at the time of recruitment positively, citing it as a factor that made it easier to adapt to the workload and relate to young learners. Conversely, other participants exhibited negative reactions to age, quickly associating being older with maturity and the ability to make wise decisions in class. However, in the same interview, they contradicted their earlier statements by noting that being recruited at an older age had affected their adaptation negatively.

Participant 7 declared, "The first weeks, I really had issues with my learners; I could not teach young children." In another interview, they added, "I feel better now, more adapted." On the contrary, Teacher 10 insisted that even after more than a year, she still does not feel she belongs or has good control over her work. Teacher 9 also expressed the same feeling but during the interviews, he was calm and only hinted at the problem of age.

3.1.6. Training

All interviewees unanimously agreed that the training they received was insufficient to prepare them for real-world teaching, whether it was the training at university or during their pre-service period. Interviewee 2 specifically stated, "All the training focuses on pedagogy, but what we truly need are classroom management classes. This is the area where I feel I need more training." Participant 8 touches on the core of the subject by saying that "dealing with kids at this age needs by itself a dedicated training program". When asked to clarify, she said "Although, we are all teachers, I think age affects the way we perform our job".

3.2. Questionnaire Results

3.2.1. Teachers' Experience and Age

The results indicate that teachers started their career as early as 22 years old. One teacher, who started at 22, remarked, "Actually, my experience is quite limited to one year of teaching. So, I can describe it as just an initial phase to the world of teaching. I'm still gaining experiences and discovering new methods and techniques, and adopting different skills." This sentiment reflects the steep learning curve faced by novice teachers as they adapt to the demands of the classroom. A 24-year-old primary teacher noted, "Teaching in primary school is very interesting and challenging for me... it's wonderful to teach kids, but our mission

encounters many setbacks such as the time afforded to English. Forty-five minutes for a session is just not enough to give everything to learners. The lack of resources too is another story; teachers' pay from their own salary to buy the needed materials." This highlights systemic issues that affect the teaching process, including inadequate time and resources.

Teachers with more than five years of experience often have a deeper understanding of the complexities of their profession. By this stage, many have taught across different educational levels and have a wealth of practical knowledge. One 31-year-old teacher with a decade of experience shared, "I taught nearly one year in the secondary school and almost five years in the middle school. Now, I am a primary school teacher with about two years of experience." However, even experienced teachers acknowledge the ongoing challenges. A teacher who started at 38 reflected, "Teaching in primary school is a very interesting and challenging experience for me... it's wonderful to teach kids, but our mission encounters so many setbacks such as the time afforded to English... many classes, more than one school... you have to displace each time." This statement echoes the earlier concerns about systemic issues and emphasizes that even with experience, teaching remains a demanding profession.

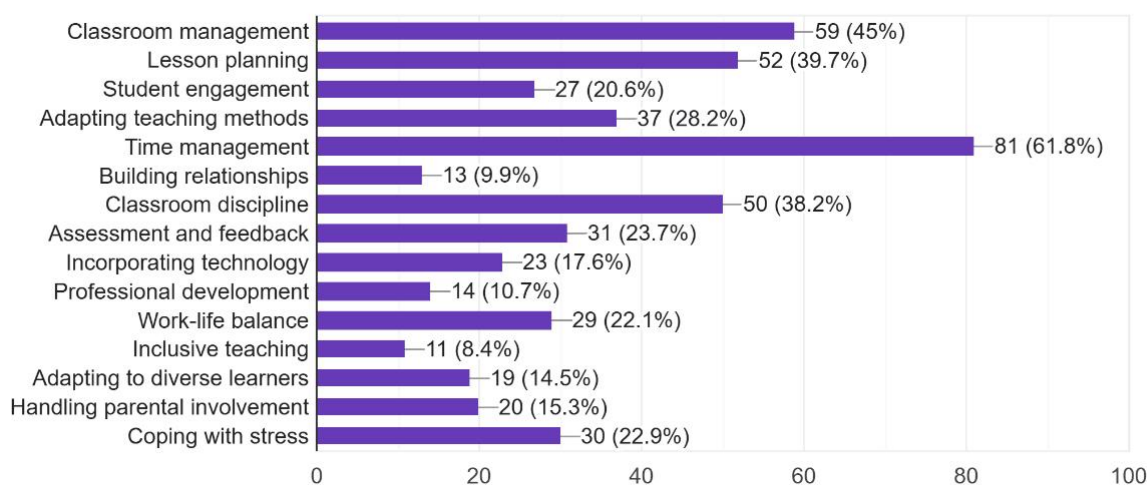
On the more senior side, a 41-year-old teacher stated, "The last thing I was expecting was to start working at this age. I am a housewife, and my work experience is limited and was even 7 years ago. I think I forgot my English." A similar sentiment was echoed by a 48-year-old teacher, who remarked, "I used to work as a carpenter for many years. I have 6 years of teaching experience, but that was back in 2010. I feel that I do not fit."

3.2.2. Commonly Reported Challenges

The questionnaire included a multiple-choice question where teachers were asked to select the types of challenges they encounter in the classroom. Figure 2 presents data on the challenges encountered by 131 educators in their work. The most frequently reported challenge was time management, cited by 61.8% of respondents. This finding aligns with previous research highlighting the significant time pressures faced by teachers (Figure 2). Classroom management and discipline issues followed closely, with 45% and 38.2% of respondents, respectively, indicating the ongoing importance of maintaining order and positive learning environments (Figure 2).

Other commonly reported challenges included lesson planning (39.7%), learners' engagement (28.2%), and adapting teaching methods (28.2%). These results underscore the complexity of the teaching profession and the diverse demands placed on educators. Notably, challenges related to technology integration, work-life balance, and inclusive teaching received lower percentages, suggesting areas where potential support and development opportunities could be targeted.

Figure 2 : Challenges facing teachers



Correlating the challenges with the age of teachers indicates that those over 30 experienced issues with work-life balance, incorporating technology-inclusive teaching, adapting to diverse learners, and coping with stress. On the other hand, teachers under 30 faced challenges such as building relationships, professional development, and classroom management. Despite these observations, the results of correlating the challenges with teachers' ages remain unreliable.

4. Discussion

The results shared above represent only a fraction of the data yielded by the research. The researcher did not anticipate the volume of data that would be collected, which complicated the analysis procedures. The analysis of the interview and questionnaire results will employ triangulation to ensure a comprehensive understanding. However, generalization is not an attribute that a researcher associates with the discussion and the final conclusion as there are contextual variables that can affect the result greatly. The connection between a teacher's age at recruitment and their experience of stress reveals several challenges that influence job satisfaction and performance. Senior teachers often face unique difficulties that can lead to increased stress, impacting their overall effectiveness in the classroom.

A significant issue is the stress linked to managing multiple school assignments. Older teachers often find the logistical complexities and physical demands of moving between schools particularly taxing. The frequent transitions and additional responsibilities can become overwhelming, with time constraints and a heavy workload exacerbating the challenge. This stress is a major contributor to burnout, as the time required to travel between schools can sometimes exceed the duration of the teaching sessions themselves.

Another challenge is adapting to teaching young learners. Older teachers, despite their extensive experience with older students, often find this background inadequate when working with younger children. The dynamic and diverse needs of young learners demand different teaching strategies, leading to increased stress and frustration for older educators who may not have anticipated these additional demands. Additionally, the social status of the teacher plays a role; older teachers with significant family responsibilities find the transition into their teaching careers particularly challenging.

Parental involvement can be a significant source of stress, especially for young teachers. The pressure to meet parental expectations and handle criticism can be particularly challenging for them. In contrast, senior teachers, with their greater social maturity, are often better equipped to manage these interactions effectively. Young teachers, however, may find these interactions more difficult to navigate, resulting in increased stress and a negative impact on their job satisfaction.

Maintaining discipline and fostering positive relationships with learners can be particularly stressful, especially when adapting to new teaching methods and technologies. This is an area where senior teachers seem to struggle more than their younger counterparts. The age gap between teachers and learners further compounds the stress experienced by older teachers as they face issues with authority perception, energy levels, relatability, and cultural shifts. These aspects need to be further investigated in future research, as the current results are not sufficient to draw definitive conclusions.

The adequacy of training is another crucial factor contributing to stress. Many older teachers report that their initial training did not fully prepare them for the contemporary demands of the classroom. Most training programs for teachers focus heavily on pedagogy, often neglecting crucial aspects such as classroom management, the age gap problem, and stress management. This oversight can leave teachers, especially those who are newly recruited or older, ill-prepared to handle the practical challenges of maintaining discipline, relating to learners of different generations, and managing the associated stress.

To sum up and address the research questions, regarding the correlation between the age of newly recruited EFL primary school teachers and their stress levels and classroom management skills, the findings indicate that older teachers at the time of recruitment are more likely to experience higher levels of stress. While teachers eventually adapt and reach a state of equilibrium, there is always a risk that such stress will escalate into a permanent issue if not addressed.

As for the second question, both the interviews and the questionnaire reveal that pre-service and in-service training programs primarily focus on pedagogy, with very limited, if any, attention given to classroom management. Additionally, these training programs do not account for the age differences among teachers, treating all educators as a homogenous group regardless of their age. This oversight fails to address the unique challenges faced by older newly recruited teachers

Conclusion

In discussions about education and teaching efficacy, rarely when topics address the age of teachers, whether they are just starting out or as they age naturally throughout their careers. Age is often an overlooked factor in the broader dialogue about educational outcomes and classroom management strategies. Indeed, considering age in this context can be deemed unethical on the grounds of equity, as such an approach could unfairly disadvantage teachers of certain age groups, ignoring their individual capabilities and contributions. Hence, it may lead to biases and discrimination. The unseen repercussions include potential demotivation of educators, loss of valuable experience, and a negative impact on teacher-student relationships and overall educational quality.

However, the research's aim is to scientifically investigate the impact of age on teachers with the intention of improving understanding, amending policies, and fostering a more inclusive and effective educational environment, and ultimately, enhancing support systems for teachers of all ages, ensuring that their professional development and effectiveness are maximized throughout their careers. Indeed, the current research ends with the conclusion that a teacher being recruited at older age, thirty and more (in the context of this research) , can struggle with classroom management, energy levels, stress levels, and even their ability to relate to learners of various age groups. Most of the teachers can adapt but there is also a chance that such issues get compounded resulting in stress, burnout, or even total failure.

Nevertheless, the issue lies in the sensitivity of the topic itself. Merely asking about the age of a teacher can invoke discomfort or defensiveness, as age is a personal and often sensitive subject. Thus, teacher training does not incorporate any discussion on the potential impact of a teacher's age on classroom management, focusing instead on universal strategies that are deemed to fit all teachers.

Lastly, extensive research has to be carried out on the subject. Future research should explore the impact of age on teaching efficacy and classroom management in a more comprehensive manner which should include longitudinal studies that follow teachers throughout their careers, examining how age-related factors evolve and interact with other variables such as experience, training, and support systems. Additionally, qualitative research involving interviews and focus groups with teachers of various ages could provide deeper insights into their personal experiences and challenges.

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