



## Research Paper

# The role of teachers' disciplinary strategies in the academic engagement of elementary school students

Mahdieh Montazeri<sup>1</sup>  Esmail Kazempour<sup>2</sup> 

1. Department of Educational Sciences, Shafagh Institute of Higher Education, Tonekabon, Iran

2. Department of Educational Sciences, To.C., Islamic Azad University, Tonekabon, Iran.

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### Abstract

The main purpose of this research is to investigate the relationship between teachers' disciplinary strategies and the academic engagement of elementary school students in Tonkabon city. This research is in the field of applied research in terms of goal and correlational in terms of research method. The statistical population of the research was made up of 264 teachers working in the primary schools of Tonkabon city and 1211 students studying in the primary schools of Tonkabon city in the academic year 1402-1403. Using stratified random sampling, the number 157 people were selected as a statistical sample of teachers and 145 people were selected as a statistical sample of students by random cluster sampling method. The data collection tools were the standard questionnaires of teacher disciplinary strategies by Lewis (2001) with reliability (0.84) and academic engagement by Salemla Aro and Apadaya (2012) with reliability (0.83). From the form and content validity, the general structure of the research questionnaires has been subject to construct validity and the validity of the questionnaires has been well evaluated and confirmed. In order to analyze the data, descriptive and inferential statistics and Pearson's correlation coefficient tests and multiple regression tests (step by step) were used using Spss software. The findings of the research indicate that there is a significant relationship between the disciplinary strategies of teachers and the academic engagement of students. The results of the research showed that there is a positive and significant relationship between the reward strategy and the dialogue and negotiation strategy with the academic engagement. Also, between the punishment strategy and the strategy There is a negative and significant relationship between aggression and academic engagement.

### Keywords:

disciplinary strategies, academic engagement, reward strategy, dialogue and negotiation strategy, punishment strategy, aggression strategy.

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<b>Corresponding Author:</b> Esmail Kazempour	<a href="https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5330-8672">https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5330-8672</a>	
<b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:E.Kazempour@iau.ac.ir">E.Kazempour@iau.ac.ir</a>	<b>Creative Commons:</b> CC BY 4.0	



## Extended Abstract

### Introduction

School is the first social institution that influences the lives of adolescents and determines the opportunities, quality of life, and behaviors of children and adolescents. School has a unique and profound impact on students' lives and plays an important role in defining an individual's overall sense of community during adolescence (Akbari, 2020). Studies have considered school, within the framework of concepts such as belonging, membership, satisfaction, commitment, obligation, and connection, as a predictor of students' educational, cognitive, behavioral, and social achievements. These studies have emphasized educational outcomes such as attention to education, school misconduct such as cheating and breaking the rules, academic success and progress, student motivation, and dropout (Amirshekari, 2018). The concept of academic engagement refers to the quality of effort that learners expend on purposeful educational activities to directly achieve desired outcomes. In general, the concept of academic engagement emphasizes the role of self-awareness in studying, metacognitive belief design, and self-regulation (Zhen et al., 2020). Academic engagement means students' engagement in academic affairs and assignments and the presence of positive and satisfying mental states with three dimensions of energy, commitment, and fascination. Academic engagement causes high levels of energy and mental resilience when studying (energy or passion), a sense of meaning, enthusiasm, and inspiration from studying (a sense of commitment), and complete concentration and joyful absorption during studying (passion) (Hassani et al., 2018). al, 2019). According to Linbrick and Pentrich (2003), academic engagement is a type of psychological investment and direct effort to learn, know, and master knowledge, skills, and arts that are actually promoted by academic activities (Mohammadi, 2019). Academic engagement is a positive state of mind in performing school tasks with high energy, commitment, and vigor, and is characterized by a lasting impact on these tasks. In addition, engagement is considered a mediator between motivation and performance. Also, Dutterer and Law (2011) define academic engagement as students' feelings, behaviors, and thoughts about school learning (Hemmati, 2016). Discipline has several definitions. Discipline in the true sense of the word is that a person personally regulates his behavior and actions, controls himself and acts according to the effects and results of his actions. Classroom management is more of a disciplinary program that includes the teacher's beliefs and values about discipline (Mohseni, 2020). The teacher's reaction to classroom situations and the methods and methods he chooses to solve classroom problems are rooted in his beliefs. Classroom management is an activity that the teacher performs to ensure that students are involved in educational activities (Roberts et al, 2023). As a classroom manager, the teacher is responsible for achieving disciplinary goals within the framework of a formal organization with defined roles (Azimpour et al, 2015). According to some research reports, more than 51% of class time is spent on resolving disciplinary issues and classroom management (Jalili & Mohammadi, 2018). Classroom indiscipline is a common phenomenon in classrooms, and this is an issue that was identified as the number one problem in American schools in Gallup polls from 1986 to 1991 (Masrabadi et al, 2018). Such reports indicate that the problems related to student misbehavior and lack of discipline are very serious and have a significant impact on the effectiveness of teacher educational activities. Teachers use various



methods in classroom discipline and dealing with student misbehavior (Germezmi, 2020). Based on a study by Lewis (2005) entitled “Teachers’ Classroom Discipline and Student Misbehavior in Australia, China, and Israel,” he pointed out six disciplinary strategies for classroom management that teachers use in the classroom. These disciplinary strategies include reward, punishment, dialogue, engagement, warning, and aggression (Rahimi, 2019). Lofranco (1991) believes that discipline refers to the actions of a teacher that prevent students from engaging in behaviors that disrupt or threaten to disrupt classroom activities (Zhang et al, 2022). Given the importance of the variable of students' academic engagement in their educational process and the future destiny of students, recognizing the factors affecting it is one of the necessities of the education system, especially educational science specialists. Since one of the most important factors affecting academic engagement is the use of disciplinary strategies in the classroom, and given that no study has examined the relationship between these variables in elementary schools in Tonekabon County so far, the present study attempts to examine this relationship. Accordingly, the researcher intends to answer the question in the present study: Is there a significant relationship between teachers' disciplinary strategies and academic engagement of students in elementary schools in Tonekabon County in the academic year 2023-2024?

### **Theoretical framework**

#### **Disciplinary Strategies**

Daniel (2011) in his research states the effectiveness of effective disciplinary strategies in the classroom to establish discipline:

1. Focus: At the beginning of the class and before you start your teaching, make sure that all students' attention is drawn to your lesson. Never try to teach students who are having fun. Inexperienced teachers believe that as soon as the lesson begins, the class will automatically regain its calm (Paridar, 2023).
2. Expressing clear and unambiguous demands: Doubts and lack of accurate information on the class schedule by students increase the level of excitement and stress in the class. Therefore, the teacher first tells all students what will be discussed in class and clearly explains the class work and may even set a specific time and date for each of his plans (Amirshekari, 2018).
3. Supervision: To be successful in this method, you should always be walking around the classroom. When students are doing their homework, walk around and monitor their progress. A successful teacher, after assigning a task to the students, starts walking and makes a complete circle around the entire classroom in 2 minutes. The teacher monitors whether the students have started to do their homework? Are they using the correct method? Have they written their name on the sheet? (Zarezadeh, 2019).
4. Example and modeling: Teachers who are active, punctual, enthusiastic, patient and organized are very good role models for their students. The statement that some teachers say: ((Do as we say, not as I do)) causes students to become confused. If you want students to do



their class activities in a quieter voice. You should also speak softly when you walk in the classroom (Gholipour et al, 2019).

### Academic engagement

More than three decades have passed since researchers interested in education introduced the concept of academic engagement in their extensive effort to identify factors related to academic achievement. Initially, engagement emerged as a theoretical model for understanding the phenomenon of academic failure and, according to Rashley and Christensen (2006), it has been the most widely accepted approach for preventive interventions for this phenomenon (Hassani et al, 2019). Academic engagement is a multidimensional construct, a definition that has expanded over time. Initially, academic engagement was defined as behavior on the task (Robayo et al, 2020).

(Naroi, 2020) In his research, he examined the disciplinary approaches in schools and the factors affecting it from the perspective of elementary teachers. The results of the study showed that informing students about the rules, allowing students to work in class at their own pace, and believing that students would follow the classroom rules were selected as the most important approaches of teachers in establishing discipline. Conversation, warning, and reward are considered the three main approaches of teachers in the city of Galicia. (Walldén et al, 2022) In their study, they addressed the topic of academic performance and engagement in line with disciplinary strategies in the classroom and concluded that there is a positive and significant relationship between disciplinary strategies and students' academic performance and engagement.

### Research Methodology

The research method was descriptive-correlational in nature. The statistical population of the research consisted of 264 teachers working in elementary schools in Tonekabon city and 1211 students in elementary schools in Tonekabon city. The statistical sample size (teachers) was calculated based on the Cochran formula as 157 people. The random sampling method was a relative stratified sampling. To determine the sample size for the second part (students), the cluster random sampling method was used. The data collection tools were the standard questionnaires of teacher disciplinary strategies by Lewis (2001) and academic engagement by Salamla Aru and Upadhyay (2012). To determine the validity of the research tool, face and content validity were used, and to determine the reliability of the research tool, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used. In order to analyze the collected data in the descriptive section, central indices (mean), dispersion indices (variance and standard deviation) and in the inferential section, Pearson's correlation coefficient test and multiple regression test (stepwise) were used by the SPSS statistical software.

### Research Findings

Descriptive statistics related to demographic information showed that male teachers constituted 26% (41) and female teachers constituted 74% (116) of the sample size. Teachers in the age group of 31-40 years old constituted the highest number of sample members with



(62) percent and teachers in the age group of 51-60 years old constituted the lowest number of sample members with (9) percent. Teachers with master's degree constituted the highest number of sample members with (30) percent and teachers with doctoral degree constituted the lowest number of sample members with (2) percent. Teachers with 11-20 years of experience made up the largest percentage (50%) and teachers with more than 20 years of experience made up the smallest percentage (10%). Also, descriptive statistics related to students indicated that among all respondents, the highest frequency was related to 11th grade students, which included 90 people and constituted 36% of the sample size. 75 students were students with 12th grade education, which constituted the lowest frequency of 29%. Descriptive statistics related to research variables showed that the highest average of the variable components of teachers' disciplinary strategies related to the punishment strategy component with a mean of 13.30 with a standard deviation of .60, the lowest average of the variable components of teachers' disciplinary strategies related to the reward strategy component with a mean of 12.36 with a standard deviation of 3.41, the average of the variable of academic engagement was 37.33 with a standard deviation of 4.46. The findings in Table (6) showed that there is a significant relationship between the reward strategy and academic engagement, because at the observed significance level ( $\text{sig}=0.0001$ ) it is smaller than the predicted error value (0.01). Given the positive correlation value ( $r=0.444$ ), it can be concluded that there is a positive and significant relationship between the reward strategy and academic engagement. There is a significant relationship between the punishment strategy and academic engagement, because at the observed significance level ( $\text{sig}=0.0001$ ) it is smaller than the predicted error value (0.01). Given the negative correlation value ( $r=0.453$ ), it can be concluded that there is a negative and significant relationship between the punishment strategy and academic engagement. There is a significant relationship between the aggression strategy and academic engagement; Because at the observed significance level ( $\text{sig}=0.0001$ ) it is smaller than the predicted error value (0.01). Considering the negative correlation value ( $r=0.451$ ), it can be concluded that there is a negative and significant relationship between the aggression strategy and academic engagement. There is a significant relationship between the dialogue and negotiation strategy and academic engagement; because at the observed significance level ( $\text{sig}=0.0001$ ) it is smaller than the predicted error value (0.01). Considering the positive correlation value ( $r=0.439$ ), it can be concluded that there is a positive and significant relationship between the dialogue and negotiation strategy and academic engagement.

### **Conclusion**

The present study investigated the relationship between teachers' disciplinary strategies and students' academic engagement. The results show that in the past fifty years, teachers have placed more emphasis on preparing programs to control and establish order in the classroom, even agreeing to corporal punishment to establish order. However, recently (the past ten years), schools have begun to place more emphasis on the teacher's responsibility to stabilize the classroom atmosphere and guide students. In order to establish discipline in schools, teachers must be familiar with appropriate control strategies and approaches so that they can control such disorders and prevent the waste of material and human capital. Teachers'



disciplinary strategies should also be adjusted in such a way that they are compatible with the students' morale and do not show an irreparable reaction in this regard. The disciplinary strategy of dialogue and negotiation argues that school students are wise people who can be corrected through dialogue and discussion or taught the correct way and path of classroom education. The reward disciplinary strategy is another method and strategy that teachers use to manage the classroom. From the beginning of the school year, teachers inform their students that any correct and acceptable performance in the classroom can lead to a reward. Accordingly, students will be eager to correct their personal and educational behaviors based on their teachers' observations and improve those behaviors in response to receiving rewards and rewards. Such students are trying to improve their academic performance in the hope of receiving rewards from teachers or the school principal. This can be examined from various aspects. The results of this hypothesis and the findings of research by (Larson et al, 2019) also reached similar results in this regard. They acknowledged that there is a positive and significant relationship between the correct use of teachers' disciplinary skills and the development and improvement of students' academic engagement. In this regard, teachers are advised to provide a favorable classroom atmosphere to encourage the active participation of students in all areas, including classroom management, teaching, planning, etc., and to use student-centered teaching methods instead of methods that are based on the use of Traditional methods (control and coercion) are used. It is suggested that in the annual evaluation of teachers, their management in the classroom should be considered as a major indicator, so that teachers are constantly looking for the best methods of classroom management and identifying and using new disciplinary tools. Considering the results of the research, it is suggested that all teachers should receive the necessary training in the field of appropriate methods of classroom management and discipline. The limitations of the present study were that because the statistical sample included elementary school teachers and because in elementary schools each teacher can only teach in one school, access to the statistical sample made the research process difficult due to the dispersion of schools in Tonekabon city. Accordingly, it is suggested to future researchers to conduct a similar study in other educational levels and compare the results of the two studies with each other.