

## MANAGING CLASSROOM: TEACHERS' STRATEGIES AND CHALLENGES

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### Abstract

Classroom management ensures optimal teaching and learning processes, especially in thematic learning. Teachers often face challenges requiring specific coping strategies, particularly because students are still young. This study describes the strategies and challenges teachers face in classroom management during thematic learning at an Islamic Elementary School in Banda Aceh. The researchers used observation sheets and interview lists to guide this qualitative research. The findings revealed that the classroom management strategies employed by second-grade teachers at the school include weekly reorganization of student seating arrangements, engaging students through question-and-answer sessions and games, classroom administration by designing lesson plans (RPP), taking attendance, providing a reading corner, ensuring availability of trash bins, keeping student personality notes, and implementing rewards and punishments. The challenges teachers face in managing the classroom during thematic learning include internal factors such as student motivation and psychological conditions and external factors such as the teacher's proficiency in designing lesson plans that integrate available learning media and facilities.

**Keywords:** Strategy, Challenge, Classroom management, Thematic learning

## Abstrak

Manajemen kelas adalah keterampilan mengajar yang penting, terutama dalam pembelajaran tematik, untuk memastikan proses belajar yang optimal. Guru sering menghadapi berbagai tantangan yang memerlukan strategi penanganan khusus, terutama karena siswa masih berusia muda. Penelitian ini mendeskripsikan strategi dan tantangan yang dihadapi guru dalam pengelolaan kelas pada pembelajaran tematik di sebuah Madrasah Ibtidaiyah di Banda Aceh. Peneliti menggunakan lembar observasi dan daftar wawancara untuk memandu penelitian kualitatif ini. Temuan mengungkapkan bahwa strategi pengelolaan kelas yang diterapkan oleh guru kelas dua di sekolah tersebut meliputi reorganisasi mingguan pengaturan tempat duduk siswa, melibatkan siswa melalui sesi tanya jawab dan permainan, penyusunan administrasi kelas dengan merancang rencana pembelajaran (RPP), melakukan absensi, menyediakan pojok baca, memastikan ketersediaan tempat sampah, membuat catatan kepribadian siswa, dan menerapkan reward dan punishment. Tantangan yang dihadapi guru dalam mengelola kelas pada pembelajaran tematik meliputi faktor internal seperti motivasi dan kondisi psikologis siswa serta faktor eksternal seperti kemahiran guru dalam merancang RPP yang mengintegrasikan media dan fasilitas pembelajaran yang tersedia.

**Kata kunci:** Strategi, Kendala, Manajemen kelas, Pembelajaran tematik

## INTRODUCTION

Teaching is a noble occupation that plays a crucial role in education. Education has a significant impact on life, so it is not surprising that the quality of education often assesses the quality of a nation. According to the National Education System Law (UU Sisdiknas) Number 20 of 2003, education is a planned effort to create a learning environment and learning process that enables students to develop their potential actively. The goal is for each individual to possess spiritual religious skills, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble character, and various skills needed by themselves, society, the nation, and the state (Budi Purnomo, 2017). The learning process at the elementary school level employs thematic learning from the 2013 curriculum, which includes themes developed into sub-themes to integrate various subjects within the curriculum structure. This curriculum's content centers on the students with contextual learning related to theme development. Student-centered learning is guided by teachers who implement inquiry-based learning and project-based learning.

Implementing thematic learning requires teachers' skills in organizing themes, presenting themes, using learning media according to the characteristics of the themes, managing the learning environment, and conditioning the classroom. Good classroom management can be achieved through a teacher who creates a more effective and enjoyable learning atmosphere during the teaching and learning process. Optimizing the learning and teaching environment as part of controlling student behavior and maintaining classroom order to ensure learning activities take place is the focus of all teachers when teaching. It is the teacher's responsibility to carry out the learning process using appropriate strategies to create a conducive, active, and enjoyable atmosphere. Choosing the right teaching strategy is a challenge that leads to the success of teachers in teaching. In selecting strategies, teachers must also be guided by the learning objectives to be achieved, the need to broaden students' knowledge, and increase their motivation to learn (Davies, I. K, 1991).

A strategy is a plan of action involving various tactics or methods to achieve predetermined goals. Classroom management strategies involve actions to create and maintain a conducive classroom environment, allowing students to learn optimally, actively, and enjoyably. This also demands that teachers continuously enrich themselves with various strategies that can be applied so that if student behaviors that disrupt the learning process arise, teachers can optimize by focusing students' attention and motivating them to engage in learning (Rahma, J & Latifah, H, 2021). Regarding classroom management, teachers should have various strategies to create effective learning while maintaining a conducive, optimal, and enjoyable learning environment.

Based on an initial study in a second-grade class at MIN in Banda Aceh, the researchers found two teachers in one class. One teacher is responsible for delivering the material, and the other assists in managing the class. However, some students still bring food into the classroom and eat it secretly, some move to their friends' desks, and some take out tools unrelated to the lesson. The phenomenon observed aligns with Sumantri and Syaodih's opinion in Minsih and Galih, stating that children at the elementary school level enjoy playing, moving, working in groups, and engaging in hands-on activities. According to Piaget's cognitive theory, children aged 7-8 and 9-14 are in the concrete operational stage, which requires teachers not only to deliver material but also to create an engaging and enjoyable learning environment to prevent lessons from becoming monotonous and boring (Minsih & Galih, A, 2018). Teachers note that younger students typically have short attention spans; they often stand up, walk to their friends' desks, or climb onto tables. Based on these phenomena, the researcher conducted further studies with teachers to identify specific techniques or strategies to manage the classroom and maintain students' focus during the learning process as well as challenges in managing their classroom.

### **Classroom Management Strategies**

Classroom Management primarily refers to the application of management principles. Management involves a series of activities, including planning, organizing, directing, coordinating, supervising, and evaluating, which a teacher undertakes to create a classroom environment that aligns with set objectives (Holmes Parhusip et al., 2021). Classroom management encompasses all aspects of learning, such as materials, methods, media, and evaluation. The teacher's efforts must maintain a conducive classroom atmosphere to ensure effective and successful teaching (Budi Purnomo, 2017; Dede Rosyada, 2004). According to Mulyasa (2007; 2009), classroom management is a teacher's skill in creating a conducive learning environment and handling disruptions that might interfere with the learning process. Disruptions are inevitable, and teachers must be adept at managing the classroom to restore a pleasant learning atmosphere. Classroom management also involves managing the physical classroom environment, enforcing classroom discipline, managing student behavior, and resolving classroom conflicts (Irjus Indrawan & Jauhari, 2022). Teachers must address these areas to create a comfortable learning environment and quickly handle disruptions to minimize downtime. Based on the experts' explanations, classroom management involves various actions and efforts by teachers to create and maintain a conducive learning environment to achieve educational objectives. It requires skills to optimize the learning process for desired outcomes.

Teachers, responsible for fostering a conducive learning environment, must adhere to the guidelines outlined in the Indonesian Ministry of National Education Regulation No. 41

of 2007 on Process Standards for Primary and Secondary Education. This regulation stipulates that classroom management should include organizing student seating, adjusting voice volume and intonation, using appropriate language, ensuring lesson relevance, maintaining order and discipline, providing comfort and safety, reinforcing learning outcomes, recognizing students' achievements, adhering to dress codes, and enforcing discipline (Permendiknas No. 41, 2007). Meanwhile, Mulyasa (2007) outlines the components of classroom management skills, which include creating and maintaining an optimal learning environment (preventive) and developing optimal learning conditions (repressive and behavior-changing). The goals of classroom management, as stated by Mulyasa (2007) and Laurensia (2022), are to establish a classroom environment that maximizes student capabilities, overcome obstacles to interaction in learning, provide and manage supportive facilities and media, and guide students from diverse social, economic, and cultural backgrounds.

Classroom management strategies encompass several key aspects:

a. Organizing the learning environment

The classroom learning environment includes the physical and social settings that affect the learning experience (Milan Rianto, 2007). Managing the physical environment involves arranging the classroom, organizing seating, ensuring proper ventilation, and providing accessible storage for materials. Several studies investigated similar issues regarding teachers' challenges and strategies in classroom management. The studies mostly found that teachers changed and rearranged students' seats based on their qualifications (Putra, D. A., Putri, H. P., & Haqqi, H., 2022; Soraya, K., Eryani, F., Andiyan, A., & Astuti, P., 2022; Khotimah, A. K., & Sukartono, S., 2022). The studies also revealed some challenges for teachers in classroom management including; hyperactive and inclusive students, dishonest parents, and indiscipline and unfocused students (Putra, D. A., Putri, H. P., & Haqqi, H., 2022; Soraya, K., Eryani, F., Andiyan, A., & Astuti, P., 2022). Managing the social environment focuses on fostering positive interactions between teachers and students.

b. Teaching methods

To maintain an effective learning atmosphere, teachers must select appropriate teaching methods. Given the diverse nature of students, teachers should master various strategies that can be easily implemented (Dena Kaifal & Ratnawati S., 2018). This includes a strong grasp of the subject matter, effective teaching strategies, classroom management skills, motivation techniques, communication abilities, and the ability to work effectively with students from different backgrounds.

c. Classroom Administration

Effective classroom administration includes periodic attendance tracking, providing special guidance areas for students, creating a reading corner, ensuring the availability of trash bins, and maintaining personal records of students to help teachers understand them better.

d. Behavior Management and Student Motivation

Schools and classrooms aim to cultivate good behavior and attitudes. Disruptive student behavior can often interfere with the learning process (Resti A. & Uep Tatang S., 2018). Teachers can implement a system of rewards and punishments. Rewards are given to students who excel, participate actively, and exhibit good behavior, while punishments are for those who break rules. This system can enhance student motivation and enthusiasm.

Classroom management strategies are needed in all types of learning, especially in thematic learning at the basic education level.

Thematic learning is an approach centered around a theme that integrates several subjects to be taught. In other words, thematic learning combines multiple subjects within a single thematic framework (Yanti Herlianti, 2015). According to Andi Prastowo, thematic learning is an integrated learning model for early childhood or primary school, specifically applied in lower grades (grades 1, 2, and 3), based on contextually relevant themes for children (Andi Prastowo, 2014). This approach is grounded in the understanding that thematic learning aligns better with the physical and psychological development of students, making the learning experience more enjoyable. Effective classroom management in thematic learning is crucial. It involves creating an engaging learning atmosphere, arranging the classroom seating to meet learning needs, and conducting learning activities both inside and outside the classroom based on specific themes (Nafi Isbadrianingtyas et al., 2016). In summary, thematic learning is an integrated process that connects or combines several subjects into a unified theme. This method aims to develop personal qualities in students that reflect attitudes, knowledge, and skills. Therefore, this integrated learning approach requires teachers to possess advanced classroom management skills.

## **METHODS**

This study employs a descriptive qualitative research method, categorized as field research, which produces data in the form of words to explain the purpose of the study (Moleong, 2007). Observation and interviews were used to find deep information from data sources to answer the research questions clearly and descriptively. The data collection instruments used in this study included observation sheets and interview guidelines. The observation sheets were used to collect data on the classroom management strategies employed by teachers, and the interview guidelines helped the researchers to ask informants about the strategies and challenges faced in managing classrooms during thematic learning at an Islamic primary school in Banda Aceh. The research subjects are respondents, defined as individuals who provide responses or treatments. In qualitative research, respondents or research subjects are referred to as informants, meaning individuals who respond by providing the information sought by the researchers (Muhammad Idrus, 2009). In this study, the subjects were three second-grade teachers from the school.

To obtain objective data, the study uses various data collection techniques and tools. To maximize data collection, the researchers employed several methods, including direct observation in the second-grade classroom. The researchers joined the teachers and students in the classroom to observe the learning process using pre-prepared observation materials. Interviews are directed conversations focused on specific issues, constituting a verbal question-and-answer process where two or more individuals face each other physically (Cholid N. & Abu Ahmadi, 2013). The conversation involves two parties: the interviewer, who asks questions, and the interviewee, who answers them (Thohirin, 2013). In this study, the researchers asked the second-grade teachers several questions according to the prepared interview sheet related to classroom management strategies and challenges in thematic learning.

Data processing or data analysis is a critical and decisive stage in research because it involves transforming raw data into meaningful insights that support the study's objectives. During this stage, data is meticulously processed and analyzed to draw accurate and reliable

conclusions. For this study, a qualitative descriptive analysis technique is employed, which encompasses several key steps: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification (Moleong, 2007). Data reduction involves condensing the data to highlight essential information while discarding irrelevant details. Data display refers to organizing the data in a structured manner, making it easier to interpret and understand. Finally, conclusion drawing and verification involve synthesizing the processed data to derive meaningful conclusions and verifying their accuracy to ensure they reflect the true findings of the research. This comprehensive approach ensures that the analysis is thorough and the conclusions drawn are well-founded and reliable.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **A. The finding**

#### **1. The result of classroom observation**

Observations reveal seven key aspects of classroom management: the arrangement of the classroom, students' seating, and storage; classroom interactions; teaching strategies; teaching administration; and interventions for students' behavior and motivation. These findings include how teachers organize the physical space to enhance learning, methods of fostering positive interactions, strategies used to engage students, administrative tasks like lesson planning and attendance, and techniques for managing behavior and motivating students. Each of these aspects contributes to creating an effective and conducive learning environment.

##### **a. Classroom Arrangement**

The classrooms for grades II A, B, and C are neatly arranged, with students' artwork displayed to enhance the classroom environment. Each classroom is equipped with the necessary desks and chairs for the 38 students, comprising 18 boys and 20 girls. Each classroom has two teachers: a primary class teacher who plays a crucial role in the classroom and an assistant teacher who helps manage the learning process. The teachers ensure the classroom is clean before starting lessons by asking students to check under their desks and chairs for trash, creating a comfortable and clean learning environment.

##### **b. Seating Arrangement**

The teachers of the three classes employ a structured approach to classroom organization to enhance focus and discipline among students. They arrange the students' desks in rows, ensuring that all students can easily see the blackboard and concentrate on the lesson. This seating arrangement is to minimize distractions and promote an orderly learning environment. Before beginning the lesson with a recitation of the prayer, the teacher has the students stand up to check their uniforms' neatness. This routine check is conducted according to school regulations and emphasizes the importance of discipline, personal responsibility, and adherence to school policies. By incorporating these practices, teachers maintain a structured and conducive learning environment and instill values of cleanliness and respect for school rules in their students.

##### **c. Storage Arrangement**

Every morning, the teachers instruct the students to open their Juz Amma as part of a program initiated by the head of the madrasah. This daily ritual involves the students reciting short surahs together, fostering a sense of unity and spiritual connection while seeking blessings for their learning. The collective recitation helps to create a calm and focused atmosphere, setting a positive tone for the rest of the school day. After completing

the recitation, the teachers guided the students to store their Juz Amma in their bags, ensuring that the classroom remained orderly and that the students developed a habit of treating their religious texts. This practice reinforces the students' memorization and understanding of the surahs and instills a sense of discipline and respect for their learning materials.

#### d. Teacher-Student Interaction

In grades II A, B, and C, teacher-student interactions are crucial in fostering a positive and engaging learning environment. Teachers begin each day by inquiring about the student's well-being, establishing a warm and caring rapport that helps build trust and comfort. This initial interaction sets a friendly tone, making students feel valued and understood. Following this, teachers provide an overview of the day's lesson, which serves to broaden the students' understanding and pique their interest. By previewing the lesson, teachers effectively prepare students for the learning activities, enhancing their readiness and engagement. This approach not only stimulates curiosity but also helps students grasp the context and objectives of the lesson, contributing to a more dynamic and interactive classroom experience.

#### e. Teaching Strategies

The teachers in grades II A, B, and C employ effective teaching strategies to maintain a conducive classroom environment by engaging each student with questions related to previously covered material. This method serves multiple purposes: it reinforces learning, ensures retention, and keeps students actively involved in the lesson. By asking targeted questions, teachers can gauge students' understanding and identify areas that may need further clarification. This interactive approach not only prevents disruptions by keeping students focused but also encourages participation and critical thinking. It creates a dynamic learning atmosphere where students are continuously challenged and motivated to engage with the content, ultimately fostering a more attentive and productive classroom environment.

#### f. Classroom Administration

The teachers in grades II A, B, and C meticulously prepare lesson plans (RPP) to ensure a structured and effective teaching approach. These plans outline the objectives, materials, activities, and assessments for each lesson, providing a clear roadmap for both teachers and students. In addition to planning, the teachers maintain detailed attendance records to monitor students' presence and punctuality. This helps in identifying patterns of absenteeism and addressing any underlying issues promptly. Furthermore, they keep personal notes on each student, documenting the performance and participation of both active students and those who face challenges during the learning process. These notes serve as valuable tools for tracking individual progress, offering targeted support, and tailoring instructional strategies to meet the diverse needs of their students. Through these comprehensive management practices, the teachers ensure a well-organized, supportive, and responsive classroom environment conducive to learning.

#### g. Student Behavior Management and Motivation

The teachers in grades II A, B, and C manage student behavior and provide motivation by incorporating advice and reminders seamlessly into their lessons. For instance, during a lesson on the importance of honesty, a teacher might share a story from the material that highlights the value of truthfulness. As the story unfolds, the teacher pauses to discuss how honesty applies to everyday situations, encouraging students to reflect on their behavior. If a

student starts to lose focus or chat with a neighbor, the teacher gently redirects their attention by asking a related question or reminding them of the story's moral. This method not only reinforces the lesson content but also subtly corrects behavior without disrupting the class. By using examples from the material, teachers create a positive learning environment where behavioral expectations are clear, and students feel motivated to stay engaged and participate actively. This approach ensures that lessons are not only educational but also character-building, helping students internalize important values and maintain focus throughout the class.

## 2. The Result of Interview

Based on interviews with the teachers of classes II A, B, and C about classroom management strategies in thematic learning and the challenges they encounter, the findings are as follows: Teachers utilize various strategies, including adjusting student seating weekly, engaging students through interactive question-and-answer sessions, and incorporating games to maintain a dynamic learning environment. They also face challenges such as motivating students, managing psychological conditions, and aligning lesson plans with available learning media and facilities. These insights highlight the complexity and multifaceted nature of effective classroom management in thematic learning contexts.

### a. Classroom Management Strategies in Thematic Learning for Grade II at the school

Learning involves a series of activities with many interactive processes between teachers and students. In thematic learning, teachers are the key to creating a comfortable and conducive learning environment, preventing disruptive student behavior. To understand the classroom management strategies used by teachers in thematic learning at the school, several questions were based on Dede Rosyada's theory on classroom management strategies. The data findings are as follows:

#### 1) Learning Environment Arrangement

The learning environment in the classroom must be well-organized by the teacher, as it is where significant interactions between teachers and students occur. It includes managing the physical and social environment. The physical environment involves classroom equipment, cleanliness, seating arrangements, ventilation, and storage organization. The social environment involves teacher-student interactions. A comfortable classroom enhances calm learning through supportive facilities. Class II C is well-equipped with a projector, a mini library, and relevant educational posters. The class is clean and organized. Class II A has sufficient equipment, including a projector, student desks and chairs, a reading corner, and a storage cabinet. Class II B lacks some equipment, such as cleaning tools and learning media. Only one fan works, which affects student focus in hot weather. Teachers ensure classroom cleanliness by scheduling cleaning duties. Teachers also participate in cleaning to supervise and guide students, maintaining a clean and comfortable learning environment.

#### 2) Seating Arrangement

Teachers regularly rearrange students' seating weekly to monitor progress and address specific needs. This includes moving students who need more attention to the front and rotating seating to ensure fair attention to all students. In class II C, weekly changes ensure all students receive attention, with a specific focus on those needing help with writing



and reading. Meanwhile, in class II A and B, similar weekly adjustments are made to support students needing additional assistance.

### 3) Item Storage Arrangement

Teachers guide students daily on where to store their belongings, ensuring items are organized and do not clutter desks. This is repeated regularly to maintain a tidy learning space.

### 4) Teaching Methods

Teachers employ diverse teaching strategies to achieve learning objectives, considering the varied backgrounds of students. These include fostering a conducive learning environment, clear communication, managing disruptive behavior, and using engaging learning strategies. Class II C encourages a conducive atmosphere by starting with greetings and inquiries about students' well-being, revising past lessons, and engaging students with questions and discussions. Meanwhile, classes II A and B begin with prayers, link previous lessons to new content, and engage students with interactive activities like quizzes and games to maintain interest.

### 5) Classroom Administration

Teachers keep detailed records of each student's behavior and progress, using these notes to discuss issues with parents if necessary.

### 6) Behavior Management and Student Motivation

Teachers use a system of rewards and punishments to manage student behavior and motivate learning. Rewards include stars, snacks, and praises for achievements, while punishments are applied for rule violations. Class II C rewards students with stars for quick writing and correct answers. Maintains engagement by incorporating games and cleaning activities to relieve boredom. Meanwhile, in classes II A and B, similar approaches with occasional treats, praises, and interactive activities like storytelling and videos to boost interest and motivation.

Based on the interviews, it is evident that the teachers of classes II A, B, and C at the school employ systematic strategies to manage various aspects of the classroom environment. They meticulously arrange seating to optimize student engagement and adjust these arrangements regularly to suit different learning activities. The teachers use diverse teaching methods, such as interactive question-and-answer sessions and educational games, to maintain student interest and participation. Additionally, they implement behavior management techniques, offering rewards and gentle corrections to encourage positive conduct and focus. These strategies collectively aim to foster a conducive and effective learning atmosphere, ensuring that each student can thrive academically and socially.

#### b. Challenges in Classroom Management during Thematic Learning at the school

To understand the challenges in classroom management during thematic learning at the school, the researchers posed several questions. The first question asked to second-grade teachers in classes A, B, and C was about the difficulties in organizing the classroom. The second-grade teacher in class C mentioned that the challenge was maintaining the neat arrangement of desks, as students often move them, making the room disorganized. Additionally, students sometimes tear down wall decorations and ask to switch seats, though the teacher managed to address these issues. In contrast, the second-grade teacher in class A reported no difficulties, thanks to assistance from an accompanying teacher. The second-grade teacher in class B faced challenges with students tearing down wall decorations and parents insisting their children sit at the front. The main issues were student protests and

parental demands. Based on interviews, the challenges for class C's teacher included keeping the classroom neat despite students moving desks, but this was manageable. The second question focused on lighting issues. The second-grade teacher in class C reported that the proximity of the classroom to nearby houses blocked natural light, making it dark despite additional lighting. The teacher in class A mentioned adequate lighting except during power outages and bad weather. The teacher in class B also faced lighting issues due to nearby buildings, which sometimes necessitated moving students closer to the front for better visibility.

From the interviews, it was found that inadequate lighting due to nearby houses caused dim classrooms for classes B and C, even with additional lighting. The third question addressed challenges in directing students to organize their belongings. The second-grade teacher in class C reported no problems, as students were reminded regularly and followed instructions. The teacher in class A similarly faced no issues, with a clear system in place for students to return items to their proper places. However, the teacher in class B mentioned that some students did not listen and required strict instructions. Interviews revealed that directing students to organize their belongings was generally not a problem, as teachers enforced clear rules. The fourth question asked about difficulties in teaching. The teacher in class C reported no significant issues, noting that maintaining order was crucial. The teacher in class A faced time constraints due to managing less attentive students, and the teacher in class B also mentioned time challenges, often needing to ensure students were attentive before teaching.

The interviews indicated that time management was a challenge for teachers in classes A and B, as maintaining student attention took up significant time. The fifth question was about administrative challenges. The teacher in class C reported difficulties in designing lesson plans (RPP) and finding suitable materials and media. The teacher in class B faced technological challenges and often required assistance to incorporate videos into lessons. Similarly, the teacher in class A struggled with technology, needing help to show educational videos and complete lesson plans. In addition, the interviews showed that administrative challenges primarily involved designing lesson plans and using technology to present educational content. The sixth question addressed behavioral management. The teacher in class C noted that managing student behavior, particularly keeping them quiet, was a common issue but manageable. The teacher in class B highlighted the need for special attention for students lacking love and care, and the teacher in class A mentioned needing patience to manage diverse student behaviors. Besides, interviews revealed that behavioral management required patience and special attention, particularly for students needing extra care. The seventh question focused on motivating students. The teacher in class C reported difficulties in motivating students with varying knowledge and skill levels, requiring extra time and focus. The teacher in class A mentioned minor challenges, as students sometimes disobeyed instructions but this could be managed through good communication. The teacher in class B faced issues with students unwilling to write, often needing parental involvement to encourage them.

The interviews concluded that motivating students required additional effort, particularly for those with lower engagement or slower learning paces. Overall, classroom management aims to maintain optimal learning conditions. Teachers must navigate various challenges to ensure an effective learning environment.

## **B. Discussion**

Based on observations and interviews, the data can be analyzed as follows:

### **1. Classroom Management Strategies in Thematic Learning for Grade II**

Classroom management strategies are tactics or methods used by teachers to maintain a conducive classroom environment. According to Dede Rosyada (2004), classroom management strategies involve creating and maintaining a classroom condition that allows students to learn optimally and achieve learning objectives. Observations and interview findings highlight that the teachers conducted classroom management in good ways.

#### **a. Learning Environment Setup**

Alifian Erwinsyah (2017) describes the learning environment as an artificial condition related to the learning process. In this school, second-grade teachers frequently rearrange student seating weekly to provide a fresh atmosphere and prevent boredom. Low-performing students are seated at the front to facilitate teacher-student interaction and instruction delivery.

#### **b. Teaching Methods**

c. Teaching should focus on active learning principles. Teachers at this school use question-and-answer sessions and games to foster an engaging and interactive learning environment. These methods encourage student participation, enhance communication skills, and maintain student enthusiasm.

### **2. Classroom Administration.**

Classroom administration includes regular attendance taking, lesson planning (RPP), setting up reading corners, providing trash bins, and maintaining personal notes on students. The teachers design comprehensive lesson plans, take attendance at the start of classes, set up reading corners adjacent to mini-libraries, place trash bins at the back of the classroom, and keep personal notes to track student progress.

### **3. Behavior Management and Motivation**

To manage student behavior, the teachers use rewards and punishments. Praise, reprimands, and incentives are employed to encourage positive behavior and maintain a conducive learning environment. The teachers implement several strategies: regular seating rearrangements, interactive teaching methods, comprehensive classroom administration, and behavior management through rewards and punishments. These strategies help create an optimal learning environment focused on student engagement rather than teacher dominance.

### **4. Challenges in Classroom Management during Thematic Learning at the School**

Interview Findings strengthen factors that lead to challenges in managing the classroom. From internal factors, it included student motivation and psychological conditions. Diverse student characteristics and low motivation levels pose significant challenges. For instance, Class II B and C each have one student, and Class II A has two students who are difficult to motivate due to their slow comprehension and reluctance to learn. Meanwhile, external factors include infrastructure and time constraints. Teachers face difficulties in designing lesson plans (RPP), finding suitable materials, and integrating learning media. Additionally, the classrooms for Class II B and C suffer from poor lighting due to nearby buildings, affecting students' visibility and learning experience. The main challenges include motivating students with low psychological engagement, difficulty in

integrating learning media with lesson content, and inadequate classroom infrastructure, such as poor lighting.

The teachers employ various strategies to manage classrooms effectively, including regular rearrangement of seating, interactive teaching methods, thorough classroom administration, and behavior management. However, they face significant challenges, particularly in motivating students and managing inadequate infrastructure. Despite these obstacles, teachers strive to maintain an optimal learning environment through various adaptive strategies.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, the classroom management strategies employed by teachers in thematic learning for Grade II can be summarized as follows: Teachers adjust student seating arrangements weekly, engage students through question-and-answer sessions and games, and manage classroom administration by designing lesson plans (RPP), taking attendance, setting up reading corners, providing trash bins, and keeping personal notes on students. They also use rewards and punishments to boost learning motivation. The challenges teachers face in managing the classroom during thematic learning include internal factors such as student motivation and psychological conditions and external factors such as the teachers' proficiency in designing lesson plans that align with learning media and the availability of supporting facilities. These strategies, when effectively implemented, can significantly enhance the learning environment by creating a more organized, engaging, and supportive classroom. Improved classroom management not only fosters better academic outcomes but also aids in the holistic development of students, ensuring they are motivated and well-supported in their educational journey. Overcoming the identified challenges through targeted strategies and continuous professional development can further optimize the learning experience and contribute to the overall success of thematic learning. Additionally, this research provides valuable insights that can help other educators understand effective classroom management practices, adapt these strategies to their teaching contexts, and ultimately improve the quality of education in various settings.

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