

IMPLEMENTING CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT FOR YOUNG CHILDREN AT PAUD BUNGONG JEUMPA, ACEH BESAR

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe the implementation of classroom management for young children at PAUD Bungong Jeumpa, Aceh Besar, to identify the factors that support its implementation, and to analyses the constraints encountered. A descriptive qualitative approach was adopted, with data gathered through observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation. The research participants comprised the school principal, who served as the principal informant, and one teacher, who served as a supporting informant. Data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles and Huberman, comprising data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing, while trustworthiness was established through source, method, and time triangulation. The findings indicate that classroom management at PAUD Bungong Jeumpa has been implemented reasonably well across the planning, implementation, and evaluation stages. Teachers foster a safe, comfortable, and enjoyable learning environment consistent with the developmental characteristics of young children by adopting play-based learning approaches, arranging the physical environment flexibly, and applying positive behavioral guidance. The principal supporting factors identified were collaboration among the principal, teachers, and parents; the availability of facilities and infrastructure; teacher competence; and a conducive school environment. The constraints identified were variation in children's individual characteristics, limited facilities and learning media, restricted instructional time, and inconsistent communication with some parents. These findings extend the existing evidence base on early childhood classroom management by illustrating how a rural, faith-based early childhood Centre in Aceh negotiates resource constraints through relational, play-based strategies. Continuous strengthening of classroom management—through teacher professional development, improved facilities, and closer home-school communication—is essential for improving the quality of early childhood education.

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INTRODUCTION

Early childhood education (PAUD, Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini) occupies a strategic position within the national education system, as it constitutes the first stage of formal stimulation for children's holistic development, encompassing cognitive, linguistic, physical-motor, social-emotional, and moral-religious domains. This period is widely recognized as the 'golden age', during which brain development reaches an optimal level and is highly responsive to environmental stimulation.

Young children experience rapid development across physical, linguistic, cognitive, social-emotional, and moral-religious domains, and therefore require appropriate stimulation to support optimal growth in every area. Early childhood education is one of the principal means through which such stimulation can be provided in a structured way, enabling children to become familiar with their surroundings, interact with peers, and develop their emerging capacities from an early age. Consequently, learning processes within PAUD institutions need to be carefully designed so that learning objectives can be achieved as effectively as possible. Within this process, teachers bear substantial responsibility for creating a comfortable and enjoyable learning atmosphere. Their role extends beyond the delivery of content: teachers must also be capable of managing the classroom effectively. Sound classroom management helps establish orderly learning conditions, enabling children to engage with activities in a more focused and active manner (Mulyasa, 2017; Djamarah, 2010).

Young children differ markedly from learners at other educational levels. They tend to be highly active, are easily distracted, and prefer to learn through play rather than through formal instruction. These characteristics often present challenges for teachers in delivering learning activities, and therefore require well-developed classroom management competence if instructional goals are to be met.

Classroom management is a central component of early childhood learning. Through effective classroom management, teachers can establish a safe, comfortable, clean, and enjoyable learning environment. It also enables teachers to regulate children's behaviour, manage instructional time, and cultivate positive relationships with learners throughout the learning process (Suyadi, 2013).

Public awareness of the importance of early childhood education has continued to grow, as reflected in the increasing number of PAUD institutions established by both government and community initiatives, including kindergartens (TK), playgroups (KB), day-care centers (TPA), and similar early childhood units (SPS). Despite this quantitative growth, the quality of PAUD provision—particularly the quality of classroom learning processes—remains a matter of ongoing concern (Pusat Data dan Teknologi Informasi Kemendikbudristek, 2025).

Internationally, the quality of process-level interactions between teachers and children has consistently been identified as one of the strongest predictors of children's developmental and academic outcomes. A recent meta-analysis of early childhood education and care quality confirmed that structural and process-quality indicators, including classroom organisation and teacher-child interaction, are significantly associated with children's cognitive and socio-emotional development across diverse national contexts (von Suchodoletz et al., 2023). Process quality, most commonly operationalized through observational frameworks such as the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS), continues to account for the greatest share

of variance in children's developmental trajectories among all structural and experiential indicators of early childhood provision (Pianta & Hofkens, 2023).

Nevertheless, a systematic review of professional development targeting classroom management and behavioral support in early childhood settings found that, although such training is consistently identified as a priority need among educators, rigorous, context-sensitive evidence on how classroom management is actually enacted—particularly outside Western, standardized-assessment traditions—remains comparatively scarce (Obee, Hart, & Fabiano, 2023). This gap is compounded by evidence that teacher–child interaction quality is shaped by teachers' self-efficacy, beliefs, and the resources available to them, factors that vary considerably by setting and are seldom examined qualitatively in faith-based or resource-constrained institutions (Yang et al., 2021).

A key competency required of PAUD teachers is, therefore, the ability to manage the classroom effectively. Classroom management refers to teachers' efforts to create and sustain optimal learning conditions so that instructional objectives are achieved efficiently and effectively. Within the PAUD context, classroom management has distinctive characteristics compared with other educational levels, given that young children have short attention spans, high activity levels, and learn predominantly through play (Mulyasa, 2017).

Effective classroom management encompasses the arrangement of the physical environment, time management, behavioral guidance, and the cultivation of positive interaction. When implemented effectively, it produces a conducive, safe, and enjoyable learning atmosphere that supports children's optimal development (Djamarah, 2010). In practice, however, PAUD institutions continue to encounter difficulties in implementing classroom management, including suboptimal arrangement of the learning environment, limited variation in instructional methods, and difficulty in managing children's behavior (Suyadi, 2013).

PAUD Bungong Jeumpa, located in Lamkeuneung Village, Darussalam Sub-district, Aceh Besar Regency, is an early childhood institution expected to deliver high-quality learning. Preliminary observation indicated that the implementation of classroom management at this institution still requires attention, both in terms of the arrangement of the learning environment and the strategies used to manage children's behavior.

Much of the existing literature on early childhood classroom management, particularly that employing standardized observational instruments such as CLASS, has been generated in Western institutional contexts (Cadima et al., 2023; Pianta & Hofkens, 2023), while editorial commentary on global early childhood quality has explicitly called for more context-specific, stakeholder-informed accounts from diverse national settings (Harrison, Baumeister, & Li, 2024). The present study responds to this call by offering a qualitative, practice-level account of classroom management in a rural, Islamic-values-based PAUD in Aceh, Indonesia—a setting that remains underrepresented in the international literature and that operates under distinctive resource and cultural conditions.

Accordingly, this study aims to describe the implementation of classroom management for young children at PAUD Bungong Jeumpa, Aceh Besar; to identify the factors that support its implementation; and to analyse the constraints encountered in practice. The findings are expected to make a practical contribution for teachers and institutions seeking to strengthen classroom management, while also contributing context-specific evidence to the broader international literature on early childhood classroom practice.

Table 1. Components of Classroom Management in PAUD

No.	Component	Implementation Indicators	Purpose
1	Physical environment	Arrangement of space, media, and play equipment	Creating a conducive atmosphere
2	Time management	Scheduling of learning and play activities	Efficiency of the learning process
3	Behavioural management	Classroom rules, positive approaches, rewards	Discipline and character development
4	Social interaction	Teacher–child communication, interpersonal relationships	Social-emotional development
5	Instructional planning	Preparation of lesson plans (RPP) and media	Focused and effective learning

LITERATURE REVIEW

Classroom management in early childhood settings is conventionally defined as the set of deliberate teacher actions—spatial, temporal, behavioral, and relational—undertaken to establish and sustain conditions conducive to learning (Mulyasa, 2017; Djamarah, 2010). Within developmentally appropriate practice, classroom management for young children departs from managerial models designed for older learners, since it must accommodate short attention spans, high physical activity, and learning that occurs primarily through play (Suyadi, 2013).

A substantial international body of work frames classroom quality through the lens of teacher–child interaction, most influentially operationalized via the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS), which distinguishes emotional support, classroom organization, and instructional support as core dimensions of process quality (Pianta & Hofkens, 2023). High-quality teacher–child interactions have been linked to gains in language, self-regulation, and social-emotional competence in very young children (Yang et al., 2021), although evidence on their association with constructs such as children's playfulness remains mixed, suggesting that highly structured interaction styles may not uniformly benefit every developmental outcome (Cadima et al., 2023).

Play-based learning is widely regarded as developmentally appropriate for early childhood, on the grounds that pretend and structured play support cognitive flexibility, executive function, and social competence (Lillard et al., 2017; Holis, 2016). Positive behavioral guidance—characterized by warmth, clear and simple rules, and social reinforcement rather than punitive control—is similarly associated with the gradual internalization of discipline and stronger child self-confidence (Djamarah, 2010).

At the institutional level, professional development in classroom management is consistently identified as a priority need for early childhood educators, yet systematic reviews indicate considerable variation in how such training is designed, delivered, and evaluated, with limited attention paid to under-resourced or non-Western settings (Obec, Hart, & Fabiano, 2023). Meta-analytic evidence further confirms that both structural indicators (for example, staff–child ratios, facilities) and process indicators (interaction quality) jointly shape children's developmental outcomes, implying that classroom management cannot be understood in isolation from the material and collaborative conditions—such as parental involvement and institutional support—within which it is enacted (von Suchodoletz et al., 2023).

Within the Indonesian context, classroom management in PAUD has been examined predominantly through descriptive qualitative case studies, which emphasize collaboration between school leadership, teachers, and parents, the adequacy of facilities, and teacher competence as recurring supporting factors, alongside constraints such as limited media, time pressures, and heterogeneous child characteristics (Arifudin & Maehi, 2025; Safitri et al., 2025; Suhardi et al., 2024). The present study builds on this national literature while engaging explicitly with the international process-quality framework, thereby situating a rural, Islamic-values-based PAUD within a broader comparative discussion of early childhood classroom management.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach using a descriptive design. This approach was selected to enable an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of classroom management implementation within the natural context of an educational institution, thereby providing a comprehensive account of classroom management practices at PAUD Bungong Jeumpa, Aceh Besar.

The research was conducted at PAUD Bungong Jeumpa, located in Lamkeuneung Village, Darussalam Sub-district, Aceh Besar Regency, Aceh Province. The site was selected on the basis of preliminary observations indicating classroom management phenomena warranting further examination, together with the openness and full support of the institution's management. The research participants comprised the school principal, who served as the principal informant, and one teacher, who served as a supporting informant, both selected on the basis of their direct involvement in the implementation of classroom management.

Data were collected through observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation. Observation was used to directly examine the learning process and classroom management practices. In-depth interviews were conducted with the principal and the teacher to elicit information regarding planning, implementation, supporting factors, and constraints in classroom management. Documentation was used to supplement the data through the collection of supporting records, including lesson plans and activity photographs.

Data were analysed using the interactive model of Miles and Huberman, comprising three continuous stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. The trustworthiness of the data was established through source triangulation, method triangulation, and time triangulation, ensuring that the data corresponded to actual conditions and that the validity and credibility of the research findings could be scientifically justified.

Table 2. Data Collection Techniques

No.	Technique	Purpose	Data Source
1	Observation	Direct observation of the learning process and classroom management	Classroom situations and learning activities
2	Interviews	Eliciting in-depth information on classroom management practice	Principal and teacher
3	Documentation	Supplementing data through supporting instructional records	Activity photographs and lesson plans

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Implementation of Classroom Management for Young Children

The findings indicate that the implementation of classroom management at PAUD Bungong Jeumpa, Aceh Besar, has been carried out through the stages of planning, implementation, and evaluation. During the planning stage, teachers prepare lesson plans (RPP) prior to each session, select activities appropriate to children's needs and characteristics, and prepare play equipment and instructional media in advance.

Management of the physical environment is achieved by maintaining classroom cleanliness and tidiness, arranging tables and chairs according to the type of activity, and displaying children's work on classroom walls to create an attractive learning atmosphere and enhance children's enthusiasm. Seating arrangements are adapted to the nature of each activity: children form a circle during group discussions, or sit at individual tables during drawing and writing tasks.

Learning is delivered through enjoyable approaches involving play, singing, storytelling, drawing, and other activities designed to stimulate children's interest. Sessions begin with greetings and collective prayer, followed by opening activities intended to prepare children mentally before the core learning activities commence. Instructional media are prepared daily according to the day's theme, in order to strengthen children's understanding and enthusiasm. In managing children's behavior, teachers adopt a positive approach, engaging with children individually, providing gentle guidance, and reinforcing rules in a courteous manner. When a child cries or is reluctant to participate, the teacher first calms the child, asks about the underlying cause, offers attention, and invites the child to rejoin the activity once their condition has improved. Teachers also provide recognition—praise, applause, or star stickers—to children who successfully complete a task, thereby strengthening their self-confidence.

Table 3. Implementation of Classroom Management at PAUD Bungong Jeumpa

No.	Aspect	Field Findings	Condition
1	Instructional planning	Teachers prepare lesson plans and media in advance	Well established
2	Physical environment	Clean, tidy classroom decorated with children's work	Well established
3	Learning implementation	Play, singing, storytelling, drawing	Enjoyable and interactive
4	Behavioural management	Positive approach, simple rules, rewards	Effective, personalised approach
5	Time management	Balance between learning and play time	Requires improvement

Factors Supporting the Implementation of Classroom Management

The interview data identified several factors contributing to the successful implementation of classroom management at PAUD Bungong Jeumpa. The most significant supporting factor was effective collaboration among the principal, teachers, and parents. Regular communication and

coordination concerning learning activities, children's development, and emerging challenges constitute a key strength of the institution.

The availability of adequate facilities and infrastructure—including comfortable classrooms, educational play equipment, and instructional media—further supports the delivery of engaging learning activities. Teacher competence in understanding the diverse characteristics of children was also identified as important, with teachers able to adapt their approach to each child's individual needs. In addition, a safe, clean, and conducive school environment contributes to children's sense of comfort and enjoyment at school.

Constraints in the Implementation of Classroom Management

Several constraints were identified in practice. The principal constraint concerns variation in children's individual characteristics: some children are easily guided, whereas others require more specific attention. Some children display difficulty concentrating, reluctance to participate, or difficulty following established rules, requiring teachers to exercise considerable patience and apply varied approaches.

A further constraint concerns limited facilities and instructional media. For certain activities, the required media are not fully available, requiring teachers to construct simple materials from available resources. Limited instructional time presents an additional challenge, as constrained time allocations sometimes prevent certain activities from being carried out to their full potential. Communication with some parents who have demanding schedules is also occasionally hindered.

Table 4. Supporting Factors and Constraints in Classroom Management

No.	Supporting Factors	Constraints
1	Collaboration among principal, teachers, and parents	Variation in children's individual characteristics
2	Availability of learning facilities and infrastructure	Limited facilities and instructional media
3	Teacher competence in understanding children's characteristics	Limited instructional time
4	Safe and conducive school environment	Communication barriers with some parents
5	Foundation support for school development	Class size affecting individual attention

DISCUSSION

The finding that classroom management at PAUD Bungong Jeumpa proceeds through planning, implementation, and evaluation is consistent with classroom management theory, which holds that the planning stage is critical to instructional success because teachers must align activities with learners' needs (Mulyasa, 2017). This structured, three-stage cycle also resonates with international process-quality frameworks, in which intentional planning and organisation constitute a distinct, measurable dimension of classroom quality alongside emotional support and instructional support (Pianta & Hofkens, 2023).

Teachers' management of the physical environment—flexible furniture arrangement and the display of children's work—reflects the classroom management principle that a well-organized physical environment fosters comfort and supports children's focus. This is consistent with meta-analytic evidence that structural and organizational features of early childhood settings are systematically associated with children's engagement and developmental outcomes (von Suchodoletz et al., 2023).

The delivery of learning through play-based approaches—singing, storytelling, and drawing—reflects teachers' understanding of young children's characteristics and learning styles, consistent with Suyadi's (2013) view that young children are active, curious, and learn predominantly through play, thereby requiring flexible and creative classroom management. This finding also aligns with international evidence that play remains central to healthy cognitive and social development in the early years (Lillard et al., 2017), while simultaneously highlighting a point of divergence from process-quality research suggesting that highly structured instructional interaction can, in some cases, be associated with reduced child playfulness (Cadima et al., 2023). The relatively unstructured, play-rich approach observed at PAUD Bungong Jeumpa may therefore represent a context-appropriate balance between guided instruction and free play, rather than a deficit relative to more formally assessed Western classrooms.

The behavioral management approach observed—positive engagement, simple rules, praise, and symbolic rewards—is consistent with the principle of warmth and closeness in classroom management (Djamarah, 2010) and mirrors broader international findings that professional development in early childhood classroom management is most effective when it emphasizes relational, non-punitive strategies rather than purely procedural control (Obee, Hart, & Fabiano, 2023). This approach appears effective in cultivating discipline gradually, as it avoids psychological pressure while promoting children's self-confidence.

Collaboration among the principal, teachers, and parents emerged as the most dominant supporting factor for successful classroom management implementation. Effective communication enables challenges to be resolved jointly and promptly. This finding corroborates Arifudin and Maehi's (2025) emphasis on the importance of collaboration among teachers, parents, and schools in creating a conducive learning environment, and is consistent with international evidence that classroom and institutional quality cannot be disentangled from the wider collaborative ecosystem surrounding the child (Harrison, Baumeister, & Li, 2024).

Teacher competence in understanding and adapting approaches to each child's individual characteristics represents a critical factor determining the effectiveness of classroom management. Teachers who can build positive emotional relationships with children and flexibly adjust their management strategies tend to create more effective learning atmospheres, a pattern broadly consistent with international evidence linking teacher self-efficacy and beliefs to interaction quality, albeit with some inconsistency across settings that warrants further context-specific investigation (Yang et al., 2021). The availability of adequate facilities and infrastructure, although still requiring improvement, likewise contributes to engaging and meaningful learning experiences for children.

Variation in children's characteristics constitutes the most frequently encountered constraint. This condition demands that teachers possess a diverse behavioral repertoire and the capacity to read situations quickly. As argued by Suyadi (2013), young children exhibit substantial individual uniqueness, such that no single uniform approach can be applied consistently;

teachers must therefore continue to develop their creativity and competence in engaging with this diversity.

Constraints relating to limited facilities and instructional media are addressed through teachers' creativity in constructing simple materials from available resources. Time-related constraints are mitigated through more structured activity scheduling, while communication barriers with parents are addressed through more intensive institutional outreach. These findings are consistent with Safitri et al. (2025), who identify resource limitation as a common challenge in the implementation of classroom management within PAUD institutions, and align with the broader international observation that classroom management cannot be improved through teacher action alone, but requires adequate structural and institutional support (Obee, Hart, & Fabiano, 2023; von Suchodoletz et al., 2023).

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussion, it can be concluded that the implementation of classroom management at PAUD Bungong Jeumpa, Aceh Besar, has been carried out in a planned manner consistent with the developmental characteristics of young children. The organization of activity corners, the use of play-based methods, and the application of positive reinforcement have together created an active learning atmosphere across the stages of planning, implementation, and evaluation. Teachers foster a safe, comfortable, and enjoyable learning environment through play-based learning approaches suited to the characteristics of early childhood.

The principal supporting factors contributing to successful implementation include effective collaboration among the principal, teachers, and parents; the availability of adequate facilities and infrastructure; teacher competence in understanding children's characteristics; and a conducive school environment. The constraints encountered include variation in children's individual characteristics, limited facilities and instructional media, restricted instructional time, and communication barriers with some parents.

Theoretically, the study extends classroom management scholarship by demonstrating that relational, play-based strategies can produce well-functioning classroom conditions even under material constraints, offering a contextual counterpoint to process-quality frameworks developed primarily in resourced, Western settings. Practically, the continuous strengthening of classroom management—through enhanced teacher competence, improved facilities and infrastructure, and strengthened communication with parents—is essential for improving the quality of early childhood education at PAUD Bungong Jeumpa, Aceh Besar, and in comparable institutions.

LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This study is limited by its single-site design and its reliance on two informants (the principal and one teacher), which constrains the generalizability of the findings beyond PAUD Bungong Jeumpa. The study also relied on qualitative observation and interview data without the use of standardized observational instruments, such as the Classroom Assessment Scoring System, which would allow more direct comparison with international process-quality benchmarks.

Future research is encouraged to adopt multi-site or comparative case-study designs across several PAUD institutions in Aceh and beyond, to incorporate the perspectives of parents and

children themselves, and to consider mixed-methods designs that combine qualitative inquiry with standardized observational measures. Such work would help to situate context-specific findings, such as those reported here, within the broader international evidence base on early childhood classroom management.

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