

The Role of Classroom Management in Early Childhood Learning Concentration

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ABSTRACT

Learning concentration is an essential aspect of early childhood education because it influences children's ability to receive, process, and respond to learning experiences. However, many early childhood education institutions still face challenges related to classroom physical conditions, such as limited space, classroom layout, lighting, and ventilation, which may affect children's concentration during learning activities. This research is based on the urgency of learning concentration in early childhood, which is influenced by the physical management of classrooms. The main objective is to analyze the influence of classroom management on student learning concentration. The approach used is qualitative through a case study, with children aged 4–6 years at Bustanul Falah Kindergarten for one month. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. The results indicate that classroom layout, lighting, ventilation, and cleanliness support children's learning concentration despite limited classroom space. Teachers addressed this challenge through flexible seating arrangements and

adjustments to classroom layout based on learning activities. It can be concluded that optimal physical classroom management helps create a learning environment that supports children's concentration. Ultimately, strategic management of the physical classroom environment is essential for fostering a supportive atmosphere that enhances children's cognitive focus.

Introduction

The early years represent the formative phase of human life, serving as a critical period that establishes the essential groundwork for all future growth and development. During this period, children go through various fundamental developmental stages that influence their development throughout their lives (Mudarlis, 2020). According to Nur (in Cecep et al., 2022) To optimize this development, special attention is needed and the implementation of appropriate education so that children's potential can develop optimally and provide provisions for the formation of personality and abilities in the future.

The primary objective of Early Childhood Education (ECE) is to offer structured stimulation that facilitates the developmental progress of children from birth through age six. These services are designed to ensure that the physical and cognitive growth of young learners is nurtured during their most formative years (Saputra, 2018). The scope of abilities that are directed to be developed in the PAUD curriculum includes moral and religious values, physical and motor function maturity, social skills, emotional stability, language skills, artistic skills,

and cognitive thinking capacity, as mandated in the Minister of Education and Culture Regulation Number 146 of 2014 concerning the 2013 PAUD Curriculum in Article 5 (Firman & Anhusadar, 2022). Strengthening all these developmental domains requires optimal attention spans during learning activities. Adequate concentration is considered crucial for children to be able to effectively focus their attention on the material presented by educators (Ayu et al., 2025). Part of the factors that have an impact on effective learning is through the creation and management of a classroom that is fun for children to carry out various learning activities (Satu & Fatkhurrohman, 2021). Effective classroom management entails the continuous establishment and maintenance of a productive atmosphere throughout the educational process. Educators bear the persistent duty of overseeing this environment; their central role involves facilitating the transfer of knowledge by ensuring the learning space remains optimal and supportive (Santy et al., 2023).

According to the Brain Balance Center (Novianti & Riinawati, 2021) the concentration span of children is based on age: 2 years (4-6 minutes), 4 years (8-12 minutes), and 6 years (12-18 minutes). A previous study by (Carpenter & Alloway, 2019) showed that 10-15% of school-age children have concentration problems, which can affect their ability to absorb learning. Additionally, data from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention indicates that approximately 9.5% of students aged 4 to 17 experience difficulties with focus in a school setting (Apriani et al.,

2023). In Indonesia itself, the problem of concentration in learning is a problem that is of important concern, even though no specific statistical data has been found; concentration in early childhood must be paid attention to from an early age.

Concentration in learning activities in early childhood is influenced by two main sources: internal factors and environmental factors. Internal factors that affect concentration include mental unpreparedness for learning, emotional stress when going to school, and physical conditions that are not optimal for performance. Conversely, external disturbances can stem from poorly structured classroom management, the implementation of monotonous and unappealing learning methods, the learning atmosphere created by educators, and limited supporting facilities and infrastructure (Musyafa'ah & Salim, 2024). Effective teaching and learning activities require well-planned and optimally functioning classroom management as a fundamental prerequisite. Furthermore, educators' success in classroom management is also determined by their ability to anticipate student behaviors that could potentially hinder the learning process, the suitability of the physical conditions of the learning space, and their competence in controlling overall classroom dynamics (Rahmayanti et al., 2022).

Previous studies have consistently demonstrated that classroom management contributes to improving educational outcomes. Nadilla Nur'aini (2025), using a quantitative approach at the elementary school

level, reported that effective classroom management significantly improved students' learning discipline. Similarly, Bau (2021) found that classroom management positively influenced students' learning motivation among junior high school students. Ilahi (2025), through a qualitative study in Islamic Education classrooms, highlighted that classroom management based on the Independent Curriculum supported more effective learning implementation. Likewise, Yantoro (2020) emphasized that effective classroom management encouraged students' self-discipline and self-regulation. Although these studies provide important evidence regarding the benefits of classroom management, they mainly focus on elementary and secondary education and examine outcomes such as discipline, motivation, or learning implementation. They pay limited attention to how the physical classroom environment contributes specifically to learning concentration among children aged 4–6 years in early childhood education settings. Consequently, empirical evidence explaining how teachers manage physical classroom conditions to maintain children's concentration in classrooms with limited facilities remains scarce.

This study addresses this gap by focusing specifically on the role of physical classroom management in supporting learning concentration among children aged 4–6 years in an early childhood education setting. Unlike previous studies that primarily investigated classroom management in elementary and secondary schools, this research explores how teachers adapt classroom layouts, lighting, ventilation,

and classroom organization to overcome space limitations while maintaining children's attention during learning activities. Therefore, this study provides practical evidence regarding adaptive classroom management strategies in early childhood education.

The learning process at the age of 4-6 years is very important for the cognitive development of early childhood, especially in children's concentration, this age range is an important stage in forming the basics for thinking (Maharani & Widjayatri, 2024). Classroom management in the learning process of children aged 4-6 years needs to get more attention, because many factors can affect the effectiveness of teaching, such as limited facilities, class manager skills, and various socio-cultural challenges that exist in the environment. Based on these gaps, this study aims to explore how physical classroom management supports learning concentration among children aged 4–6 years at Bustanul Falah Kindergarten. Specifically, this study investigates teachers' adaptive strategies in organizing classroom layouts, maintaining classroom comfort, and minimizing environmental distractions to create a learning environment that supports children's concentration.

Although previous studies have confirmed that classroom management contributes to improving students' discipline, motivation, and learning outcomes, limited attention has been given to how physical classroom management supports learning concentration among children aged 4–6 years in early childhood education settings. Moreover, little empirical evidence explains how teachers adapt the

physical classroom environment when faced with limited classroom space while maintaining children's attention during learning activities. Addressing this gap, the present study aims to explore the role of physical classroom management in supporting learning concentration among children aged 4–6 years at Bustanul Falah Kindergarten. Specifically, this study examines teachers' adaptive strategies in organizing classroom layouts, optimizing lighting and ventilation, and maintaining classroom cleanliness to minimize distractions and create a conducive learning environment for young children.

Methods

This study employed a qualitative case study design to obtain an in-depth understanding of how physical classroom management supports learning concentration among children aged 4–6 years. A case study approach was selected because the research focused on a single educational setting with unique contextual characteristics that required comprehensive exploration rather than statistical generalization. Bustanul Falah Kindergarten was selected as the research site because it has good institutional accreditation and adequate learning facilities while simultaneously experiencing limited classroom space shared by Groups A and B. This condition required teachers to continuously adapt the physical classroom environment to maintain children's learning concentration, making the school an appropriate single-case setting for investigating adaptive classroom management practices.

In this study, the researcher served as the main instrument in the research and was present in the field as a non-participant observer. The investigator maintained a non-participatory role, opting for systematic observation of the educational process to ensure that classroom dynamics remained authentic and unaffected by their presence. Participants were selected using purposive sampling because they had direct experience with classroom management and children's learning behaviour. The participants consisted of 31 children aged 4–6 years from Groups A and B who were observed during classroom activities. The research site was purposively selected because Bustanul Falah Kindergarten has adequate learning facilities while facing limited classroom space shared between two learning groups. This condition requires teachers to continuously adapt the physical classroom environment to support children's learning concentration, making it an appropriate case for this study. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the principal (n = 1), classroom teachers (n = 2), and parents (n = 5). The principal was selected because of responsibility for school management, teachers because they directly managed classroom activities, and parents because they could provide information regarding children's learning behavior. The study was conducted from October to December. Data collection techniques used observation according to classroom management instruments and early childhood concentration instruments.

Variable	Indicator	Sub-indicator
Physical Classroom Environment	1. Classroom layout and arrangement	1.1 Flexibility of desk arrangement. 1.2 Accessibility for teachers and children.
	2. Lighting and ventilation	2.1 Placement of light sources. 2.2 Natural and artificial ventilation. 2.3 Classroom temperature and humidity.
	3. Classroom cleanliness	3.1 Cleanliness of floors, walls, and ceilings. 3.2 Organization of learning materials and storage shelves.

The observation instrument was adapted from Utami (2019) and modified to suit the characteristics of early childhood classrooms at Bustanul Falah Kindergarten.

Participants	Interview Focus
Principal	School policy regarding classroom management; classroom facilities; strategies for overcoming classroom space limitations; support for children's learning concentration.
Classroom teachers	Classroom layout arrangement; management of lighting and ventilation; organization of learning materials; challenges in maintaining children's concentration; adaptive classroom management strategies.

Participants	Interview Focus
Parents	Children's concentration during learning; children's responses toward the classroom environment; parents' perceptions of classroom comfort and learning effectiveness.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted using different interview guides for each participant group. Questions for the principal focused on school policies and classroom facilities. Teacher interviews explored classroom organization practices, adaptive strategies, and challenges in maintaining children's concentration. Parent interviews focused on children's learning behaviour, classroom comfort, and parents' perceptions of the influence of the classroom environment on children's concentration.

The observation instrument was implemented using a structured observation checklist. Each indicator was assessed using a dichotomous checklist (Yes = implemented; No = not implemented) and was complemented by descriptive field notes to provide contextual explanations of classroom conditions. The child concentration instrument refers to the reference (Rusyidiana et al., 2023) as follows.

No	Indicator
1	Children can actively pay attention to each material.
2	Children can respond and understand each material.
3	Children can be active by asking questions.
4	Children can answer every question given by the teacher well

	and correctly.
5	Children can be orderly (calm) and not noisy during learning activities.
6	Children's concentration was documented descriptively during learning activities and categorized according to the developmental achievement criteria used by the kindergarten, namely Beginning to Develop (MB) and Developing as Expected (BSH).

To complement the observations, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the principal (n = 1), classroom teachers (n = 2), and parents (n = 5). Different interview guides were developed according to participants' roles. Interviews with the principal focused on school policies regarding classroom management and learning facilities. Teacher interviews explored classroom organization strategies, classroom management challenges, and efforts to maintain children's learning concentration. Parent interviews focused on children's learning behaviour, classroom comfort, and perceived concentration during learning activities. These findings were further corroborated by documentary evidence, such as photographic records. Data were analysed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), consisting of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. During data condensation, observation notes, interview transcripts, and documentation were coded and grouped into themes related to classroom physical management and children's

learning concentration. The organized data were then presented in descriptive matrices and narrative summaries to facilitate interpretation. Conclusions were continuously verified by comparing information obtained from observations, interviews, and documentation until consistent findings were achieved.

The credibility of the findings was ensured through source triangulation by comparing information obtained from the principal, classroom teachers, and parents. Method triangulation was also conducted by comparing findings derived from observations, interviews, and documentation. The consistency of information across these data sources strengthened the trustworthiness of the findings.

Result and Discussions

Based on information obtained in the field, the description in the results section focuses on the realization of the role of classroom physical management in the concentration of children aged 4-6 years. The role of classroom physical management is to support learning concentration in the institution, so that children's concentration supports learning. Based on the results of interviews with class teachers, the principal, and parents, classroom physical management at Bustanul Falah Kindergarten includes classroom layout, lighting and ventilation, and classroom cleanliness and tidiness.

Classroom layout

The classroom layout is flexible and tailored to the learning activities. The class teacher emphasized that the tables and chairs

should not be positioned permanently to ensure children feel comfortable and avoid boredom.

“I often change the arrangement of tables and chairs according to the activity so that the children are more comfortable and don't get bored quickly while studying.” (*IL*– Class Teacher)

Another teacher also said that limited space, especially for classrooms that are used in shifts, is a challenge because it can affect children's focus.

“Because the class is shared, sometimes children are easily distracted by other class activities.” (*BM*, *S.PD* – Class Teacher)

This statement was reinforced by parents who said that classroom conditions that share space can affect children's concentration while studying.

“If the class is shared, children will be less focused because of the many distractions” (*Nf* – Parent)

The principal stated that despite space limitations, the school is still trying to arrange the classroom as best as possible.

“Even though the is limited, we still try to arrange the classroom so that the children remain comfortable in learning.” (*YAP*, *S.Pd* – Headmaster)

Observation findings confirmed that classroom tables and chairs were arranged flexibly according to the type of learning activity. During group activities, tables were organized into small clusters to encourage interaction, whereas during individual learning sessions, the

arrangement provided wider movement space for children. The researcher also observed that children generally remained attentive during classroom activities; however, several children sitting near the classroom entrance were more easily distracted by activities occurring outside the classroom.

Classroom lighting and ventilation

The results of the lighting and ventilation of the classroom are considered quite good and support children's comfort during learning.

"The lighting in the classroom is bright enough and the air circulation is good, so the children don't feel stuffy." (*IL, S.Pd-Class Teacher*).

Similar things were said by other class teachers.

"Classroom ventilation and lighting are sufficient, so children can study comfortably." (*BM, S.Pd – Guru Kelas*).

The principal emphasized that lighting and ventilation are the school's primary concerns.

"We pay attention to lighting and air circulation because it affects children's comfort while studying." (*YAP, S.Pd – Headmaster*)

Classroom observations also showed that natural light entered the classroom through large windows, while adequate ventilation maintained good air circulation throughout the learning process. During observations, children appeared comfortable and were able to participate in classroom activities without signs of discomfort caused by

poor classroom temperature or insufficient lighting.

Classroom Cleanliness and Tidiness

Classroom cleanliness and tidiness are routinely maintained by teachers and school staff. Educational toys are stored neatly after use to avoid distracting children.

“We always tidy up the APE and store it in the cupboard so that children are not disturbed during learning activities.” (*IL, S.Pd–Class Teacher*).

Other class teachers also said the same thing.

“If the classroom is neat and clean, children are more focused and not easily distracted.” (*BM, S.Pd – Class Teacher*).

Parents think that clean and tidy classroom conditions make children more comfortable.

“A clean and tidy classroom makes children feel at home and more ready to learn.” (*Nf – Parent*)

Observation results further indicated that educational play equipment (APE) and learning materials were neatly stored after classroom activities. The researcher observed that the organized classroom environment reduced unnecessary visual distractions, enabling children to remain focused during teacher-led learning activities.

Based on the results of interviews with class teachers, principals, and parents, and supported by observations of classroom conditions, it can be concluded that the physical management of classes at Bustanul

Falah Kindergarten has been implemented through flexible classroom arrangements, adequate lighting and ventilation, and routinely maintained classroom cleanliness and tidiness. Despite the limited number of classrooms used alternately, teachers and the school continue to strive to organize the learning environment so that children feel comfortable during the learning process. Effective organization of the physical classroom serves as a vital foundation for fostering a productive educational atmosphere and enhancing the attentiveness of students aged 4 to 6 at Bustanul Falah Kindergarten.

Based on observations of 31 children from groups A and B at Bustanul Falah Kindergarten, it was observed that the children's concentration levels varied across categories, with the majority falling within the Developing as Expected (BSH) category and some falling within the Beginning to Develop (MB) category. This finding indicates that, in general, the children have adequate concentration abilities for up to 10 minutes, although not yet fully consistent across all indicators. In group A, the children's concentration levels appeared more varied. While some children achieved BSH across all indicators, others consistently fell within the MB category in almost all aspects, such as attention to material, lesson comprehension, and active questioning and answering. This situation indicates that some children have difficulty maintaining focus for a certain duration. In group B, most children demonstrated good abilities in paying attention to lesson material, responding to learning, and answering teacher questions. This was

reflected in the dominance of BSH achievements in the material understanding and response to questions indicators. In addition, the children were generally able to maintain order during the learning process, indicating that the classroom atmosphere supports a conducive learning environment. However, there were still several children in the MB category, especially in the indicators of active questioning and maintaining sustained attention.

Documentation of the learning process was used to support observational findings regarding children's learning concentration. The photographs illustrate children's participation, attention, responsiveness, and classroom behavior during learning activities.



Picture 1. Learning Process

When combined with interview results and classroom physical management, these findings illustrate the link between the learning environment and children's concentration. Flexible spatial planning, adequate lighting, and classroom cleanliness and tidiness have been shown to play a role in helping children achieve BSH. Children tend to be more focused, responsive to learning, and orderly when in a comfortable and organized classroom environment. However, the

limited classroom space used is divided into two inhibiting factors, resulting in the emergence of MB categories in some children. Disturbances from the external environment and distractions from other classroom activities cause decreased concentration, particularly in indicators of attention to material and active questioning. Overall, these observation results confirm that early childhood learning concentration is influenced not only by internal factors but also by the physical condition of the classroom. Optimal classroom management can improve the quality of children's concentration, although additional supporting strategies are needed to overcome space limitations and strengthen consistency of attention during learning, reinforced by documentation in the form of photographs of the classroom's physical environment.

Documentation of the classroom physical environment was used to verify observational findings related to classroom layout, lighting, ventilation, cleanliness, and the arrangement of learning facilities. These aspects were examined to understand their contribution to children's learning concentration.



Picture 2. Physical condition of the class

The study revealed that the physical management of classrooms plays a significant role in improving early childhood learning concentration. This finding can be explained by Urie Bronfenbrenner's developmental ecology theory, which asserts that a child's development is influenced by their immediate environment (microsystem), such as the school and classroom environment (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). In this context, the physical conditions of the classroom, such as room layout, lighting, and cleanliness, are part of the environment that directly impacts children's learning behavior and concentration. The present findings are consistent with the study conducted by Harianja et al. (2025), which reported that effective classroom management contributes to students' learning readiness and classroom discipline. However, the present study extends these findings by demonstrating that adaptive physical classroom management is particularly important in early childhood classrooms with limited physical space. At Bustanul Falah Kindergarten, teachers continuously rearranged tables and chairs according to different learning activities to reduce distractions and maintain children's concentration. These findings indicate that classroom management functions not only as an organizational practice but also as an adaptive strategy to overcome environmental constraints in early childhood education.

Flexible classroom layouts have been shown to help improve children's focus. Changing the position of tables and chairs and arranging study areas can reduce boredom and increase children's

engagement in learning. This finding aligns with research that structured and varied classroom management can create an active and conducive learning environment for young children (Sultan et al., 2023). Furthermore, the strategy of placing children with poor focus near the teacher suggests that physical classroom management can also be used as an intervention to improve children's attention. However, the limited space in a shared classroom can be a limiting factor due to distractions from the surrounding environment.

In terms of lighting and ventilation, research results show that well-lit classrooms with good air circulation make children more comfortable and less likely to tire. The findings regarding classroom lighting and ventilation are in line with Pangestuti (2023), who reported that a comfortable learning environment enhances the effectiveness of early childhood learning. Nevertheless, the present study provides additional evidence that teachers actively optimized natural lighting and classroom ventilation as practical classroom management strategies to maintain children's attention throughout learning activities despite classroom space limitations. Comfortable learning environment is a crucial factor in supporting the effectiveness of early childhood learning (Pangestuti, 2023). An uncomfortable environment can cause children to quickly lose focus. The present findings also support Carpenter and Alloway (2019), who argued that excessive environmental stimuli may reduce children's attention. However, this study further demonstrates that systematic organization of educational play equipment (APE) and

learning materials can minimize visual distractions and improve children's ability to sustain attention during classroom learning activities. This finding can be explained through attention theory, which states that children's attention is easily distracted by excessive stimuli in their surroundings (Casrpenter & Alloway, 2019). Therefore, arranging educational play equipment (APE) neatly and without clutter can minimize visual distractions, making it easier for children to focus on learning activities.

Furthermore, research results show that the concentration span of early childhood is still limited, at around 5–10 minutes. This aligns with the developmental characteristics of early childhood, which has a short attention span, with the longest concentration span being 12–18 minutes (Novianti & Riinawati, 2021). Therefore, good classroom management needs to be balanced with a variety of learning activities to maintain children's focus. Internal factors such as the child's physical condition (hunger, fatigue, drowsiness) and external factors such as a noisy environment also play a role in concentration, as explained in the theory that attention is the result of the interaction between individual conditions and the environment.

Overall, the present findings strengthen Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory by demonstrating that the physical classroom environment, as part of the child's microsystem, directly influences learning concentration. Compared with previous studies that primarily emphasized classroom management in relation to discipline and

learning motivation, this study highlights the importance of teachers' adaptive strategies in organizing limited classroom space to sustain young children's attention. Therefore, the contribution of this study lies in providing practical evidence that effective physical classroom management is not solely determined by classroom size but also by teachers' ability to adapt the learning environment according to children's developmental needs.

Conclusion

This study achieved its objective of exploring the role of physical classroom management in supporting learning concentration among children aged 4–6 years at Bustanul Falah Kindergarten. The findings demonstrate that adaptive management of the physical classroom environment, including flexible classroom layouts, adequate lighting and ventilation, and well-maintained classroom cleanliness, contributes to creating a learning environment that supports children's attention and active participation during learning activities. Although classroom space was limited and shared between learning groups, teachers implemented adaptive classroom management strategies that helped minimize distractions and maintain children's concentration.

The main contribution of this study lies in providing empirical evidence that effective physical classroom management is determined not only by classroom facilities but also by teachers' ability to adapt the learning environment according to children's developmental needs and existing classroom constraints. This finding enriches the literature on

early childhood classroom management by highlighting adaptive physical management strategies within classrooms with limited space.

Practically, the findings may serve as a reference for school principals and early childhood educators in designing classroom environments that enhance children's learning concentration through flexible classroom organization, effective use of available space, and appropriate management of learning facilities.

This study was limited to a single kindergarten using a qualitative case study approach. Therefore, future studies are recommended to involve multiple early childhood education institutions with different classroom characteristics and to employ mixed-method or quantitative approaches to examine the relationship between physical classroom management and children's learning concentration more comprehensively.

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