

## **EFL PRE – SERVICE TEACHERS’ CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES IN TEACHING PRACTICUM**

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**ABSTRAK:** Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi tantangan manajemen kelas yang dihadapi oleh calon guru EFL selama praktik mengajar mereka. Penelitian ini mengidentifikasi tantangan instruksional, perilaku, psikologis, dan kontekstual melalui wawancara semi-terstruktur dan daftar periksa observasi. Masalah instruksional meliputi pekerjaan rumah yang tidak selesai, kemampuan peserta didik yang tidak konsisten, ketergantungan pada berbicara dalam bahasa pertama, dan manajemen materi. Tantangan perilaku meliputi keterlambatan siswa, kurangnya partisipasi, stres, demotivasi, dan perilaku mengganggu. Tantangan psikologis menyoroti penggunaan media seluler, sementara tantangan kontekstual melibatkan pengelolaan kelas yang sibuk dan manajemen waktu. Untuk mengatasi tantangan ini, calon guru menggunakan strategi seperti pengingat lisan, pendekatan instruksional yang disesuaikan, teknik motivasi, dan metode manajemen kelas yang terstruktur. Strategi ini konsisten dengan teori yang mapan dan menggarisbawahi pentingnya kemampuan beradaptasi, kolaborasi, dan pengembangan profesional yang berkelanjutan. Temuan ini menggarisbawahi perlunya strategi yang komprehensif dan mendukung untuk menciptakan lingkungan belajar EFL yang efektif dan menarik. Pada akhirnya, ini akan meningkatkan hasil siswa selama praktik mengajar dan meningkatkan keterampilan manajemen kelas calon guru.

**Kata Kunci:** Tantangan Pengelolaan Kelas, Calon Guru, Strategi

**ABSTRACT:** This research explores classroom management challenges faced by EFL pre-service teachers during their teaching practicum. The research identified instructional, behavioural, psychological, and contextual challenges through semi-structured interviews and observation checklists. Instructional issues include uncompleted homework, learners’ inconsistent abilities, reliance on first-language speaking, and material management. Behavioural challenges encompass student lateness, lack of participation, stress, demotivation, and disruptive behaviours. Psychological challenges highlight the use of mobile media, while contextual challenges involve managing hectic classrooms and time management. To address these challenges, pre-service teachers employ strategies such as verbal reminders, tailored instructional approaches, motivational techniques, and structured classroom management methods. These strategies are consistent with established theories and underscore the significance of adaptability, collaboration, and ongoing professional development. The findings underscore the necessity for comprehensive and supportive strategies to create effective and engaging EFL learning environments. At the end, this will improve student outcomes during the teaching practicum and improve the classroom management skills of pre-service teachers.

**Keywords:** *Classroom Management Challenges, Pre-Service Teacher, Strategies*

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Background of The Reasearch**

Classroom management is an essential part of the process of teaching (Taha, 2022). Sweller et al. (2017) stated that classroom management provides a setting where students can actively engage in the process of learning while also encouraging positive behaviour and minimizing interruptions. In line with Yasin et al. (2022), who stated that the teacher might use behaviour engagement as a way to encourage students to participate fully during the course of education with the goal of assisting students in discovering their interests, so facilitating their ability to sustain cognitive, academic, social, relational, and intellectual involvement. Classroom management has multiple problems for educators, particularly for pre-service teachers, which require them to manage various complexities to provide the best learning environment possible (Keser & Yafuz, 2018). The potential problems and barriers in effectively managing a classroom could be related to factors such as large student populations, limited available resources, and the growing variety of students, particularly in urban educational settings (Kwok, 2017). According to Copland et al. (2014), certain nations like South Korea and Malaysia have fixed textbooks, whereas in Singapore and China, teachers have the freedom to choose among government-approved books. However, in many countries, suitable literature has become accessible or unused in the classroom for resources. Ajibola (2010) claimed that the lack of resources is a challenge to English education since a broader range of students need a higher quantity of resources. Based on Zhou & Li (2015) they are focused on the differences in culture that exist between students and their American instructors.

Recent studies have been conducted on effective classroom management and its impact on student learning outcomes. Effective classroom management is advantageous to the effectiveness of instruction and contributes to learners' development as a whole, impacting learning outcomes and confidence (Xu et al., 2023). Moreover, Effective classroom management techniques and efforts contribute to the behavioural, academic, emotional, social development, and motivational achievements of students, with social-

emotional development being the largest contributor (Korpershoek et al., 2016). In summary, current research confirms the critical role that efficient classroom management plays in supporting the overall development of students. With a variety of individuals, the academic and social-emotional outcomes of students are greatly influenced by their teachers. Positive behaviour and academic success are also encouraged in a supportive learning environment. In line with Serliana et al. (2021) showed that Pre-service English teachers face challenges in classroom management Regarding students' negative attitudes and lack of willingness to study, such as cheating in the classroom, ignoring the teacher, and refusing to respond. Some challenges pre-service teachers have encountered include their misconduct, disciplining students, training students, and leaving the classroom (Masood et al., 2022)

However, there is little information about classroom management conducted by pre-service teachers. A lack of information and research exists on the specific difficulties encountered by pre-service teachers in managing the classrooms, particularly within the context of EFL pre-service teachers. Moreover, this part includes some relevant studies that serve as foundations for development. Tshibangu & Mulei (2018) conducted a study on classroom management in Kenya, specifically focusing on the factors influencing students' discipline. Nevertheless, it does not include the challenges of the classroom management methodology. Also, a similar study led by Jepketer et al. (2015) conducted a study that examines the teachers' classroom strategy used by teachers in public secondary schools in Nandi County, Kenya. Unfortunately, this does not demonstrate an in-depth discourse within a single educational institution or a certain class. While numerous studies have examined general aspects of classroom management, such as students' discipline and instructional strategies, there is little available information regarding the unique challenges encountered by pre-service teachers in the realm of classroom management. Based on the problems stated above, the objective of this study, to examine the challenges encountered by pre-service teachers of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in managing their classrooms, as well as the strategies they use to overcome these challenges. This study is limited to exploring phenomena at specified school levels and with specific participants. To fill the aim of this study, the researcher formulated one research questions below :

- 1) What the classroom management challenges pre-service teachers encountered throughout their English teaching practicum?

How the pre-service teachers overcame the classroom management challenges in EFL classroom settings?

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Theoretical Framework**

- Theories on Classroom Management

Classroom management is crucial for creating an efficient and supportive educational environment. It involves strategies to maintain order, optimize learning time, and foster academic and social-emotional growth. Effective classroom management ensures lessons proceed smoothly, minimizing disruptive behavior (Santhanam, 2022). According to Soheili et al. (2015) and Evertson et al. (2020), it includes organizing rules and routines, promoting respectful interactions, and enhancing learning opportunities. Bozkuş (2021) emphasizes the importance of time management in optimizing student learning.

- Teaching Practicum

Teaching practicum is essential in teacher education, particularly for EFL pre-service teachers, bridging theoretical learning with practical application in real classrooms (Choo et al., 2019). It helps prospective teachers develop teaching skills, understand classroom dynamics, and gain confidence (Avalos, 2011). Classroom management is a significant challenge during practicum, involving order maintenance, creating positive environments, and handling disruptions (Sweller et al., 2017). EFL teachers often struggle with discipline and diverse student needs due to communication barriers (Rosas & West, 2009).

- Pre-service Teachers

Pre-service teachers play a vital role in shaping the future of education. Effective classroom management is crucial, yet many pre-service teachers struggle with it (Allen & Anderson, 2017). Integrating service learning into teacher education can help, promoting critical thinking, reflective practice, and real-world problem-solving (Anderson, 2001). This approach enhances personal and social

development, fostering a sense of civic responsibility and respect for diversity. Pre-service teachers need comprehensive knowledge in content, pedagogy, curriculum, context, and process (Gao & Yang, 2023).

- **Challenges of Classroom Management**

Classroom management presents numerous challenges for teachers, including creating a positive learning environment, managing disruptive behavior, and accommodating diverse needs. Key challenges encompass instructional issues like handling unfinished assignments, varying proficiency levels, and ensuring consistent use of the target language, which necessitates effective material selection and teaching methods (Raymundo, 2023). Behavioral and psychological challenges, such as student lateness, fear, lack of interest, noise, and mobile phone distractions, disrupt learning and require effective strategies and a supportive environment (Schmidt, 2024).

### **Previous Related Study**

The study on the challenges in classroom management, as evidenced by the investigations conducted by Tshibangu and Mulei (2018) and Ramirez (2019), underscores the significance of providing comprehensive training and support to prospective educators. Educators grapple with a fight of classroom management challenges. Teacher preparation programs possess the capacity to enhance the abilities of individuals wishing to become teachers by equipping them with the necessary skills and confidence to create a positive and conducive learning environment for their prospective students (Riera et al., 2023). This can be achieved by identifying and effectively addressing the challenges associated with this endeavour.

### **Conceptual Framework**

This study's conceptual framework intended to investigate the pre-service teachers' challenges encountered throughout their English teaching practicum and how the pre-service teachers overcome the classroom management challenges in the EFL classroom. Soleimani & Razmjoo (2016) identified three primary categories of challenges in classroom management: instructional challenges, behavioural & psychological challenges, and contextual challenges.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The researcher employed a descriptive qualitative approach to understand the classroom management challenges faced by EFL pre-service teachers. This method, suitable for comprehending the "how" and "why" behind behaviors, provides a detailed examination of the independent and dependent variables involved (Creswell, 2018). The study focused on four pre-service teachers from a private university during their teaching practicum program. Data collection involved an observation checklist and semi-structured interviews to gain a comprehensive understanding of the challenges these teachers faced.

The research was conducted at a public Junior High School in Kapuk, West Jakarta, from October 2023 to August 2024. The participants were pre-service students majoring in the English Language Education Study Program, teaching at a state Junior High School in West Jakarta.

Data collection procedures included observation checklists and semi-structured interviews. Observation checklists provided a broad understanding of the field situation, while semi-structured interviews allowed for detailed discussions about classroom management challenges and strategies. Permission was sought from participants for interviews, which were conducted via Zoom and recorded for analysis. Data analysis followed Miles and Huberman's (1994) interactive paradigm, involving data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction focused on the research questions, simplifying complex data from observations and interviews. Data display organized the information for clarity, using notes, interview transcriptions, and descriptive text. Conclusions were drawn based on the evidence gathered, ensuring reliability and consistency. This structured approach enabled the researcher to address the research questions effectively and provide insights into the challenges and solutions for pre-service teachers in managing EFL classrooms.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Result**

In this chapter, the researcher describes the core findings from the observation checklist and semi-structured interviews for this study. The researcher analyzed the data

based on Soleimani and Razmjoo’s (2016) findings which state there are three primary categories of challenges in classroom management: instructional challenges, behavioural & psychological challenges, and contextual challenges. The following are the findings obtained by researchers after conducting research on EFL pre-service teachers' classroom management challenges in teaching practicum. The findings are described in depth as follows:

Instructional Challenges

The first table presents five subthemes that are relevant to challenges related to the instructional components. Most participants reported that uncompleted homework and students focus on first-language speaking posed significant challenges for them. Regarding this matter, an interviewee expressed:

- T2: *“Definitely there is. Sometimes there are students whose arrival hasn't finished yet the homework.”*
- T4: *“Well, this is really true because most of them speak Indonesian, but they rarely use English.”*

Table 1

Instructional Challenges	Strategies to Overcomes
A. Uncompleted Homework	<div>1. Verbal warnings</div> <div>2. Make class agreements</div> <div>3. Penalties (reducing grades / score)</div>

B. Learners' Inconsistent Ability	1. Assessment diagnostic 2. Create study groups 3. Work in pairs
C. Students Focus on First- Language Speaking	1. Create class agreement 2. Giving motivation 3. Encouragement
D. Material and Syllabus Management	1. Additional resources 2. Collaboration with other teachers
E. Inappropriate Teaching Methods with Learning Outcomes	-

In brief, EFL pre-service teachers encounter substantial instructional obstacles during their teaching practicum, such as handling incomplete homework, addressing learners' varying abilities, promoting the use of English over the native language, and ensuring that teaching materials are in line with the syllabus. These issues disturb the dynamics of the classroom and hinder the process of learning. Nevertheless, pre-service teachers utilize a range of tools, including verbal prompts, customized instructional methods, motivating tactics, and professional training, to address and minimize these challenges. These strategies are in line with proven educational theories and frameworks, creating an organized and inclusive learning environment that improves student



engagement and academic advancement. Efficiently addressing these obstacles is vital for achieving excellent teaching practicum experiences.

Behavioural and Psychological Challenges

This category also have five subthemes challenges that related to Behavioural and Psychological Challenges. From all participants has reported that students’ lack of participation to speak and disruptive students presented themselves as major obstacles for them. An interviewee stated their opinion on this matter:

- T4: “We’ve found it, once or twice, and we approached the student.”
- T4: “These are mostly guys who often bother their friends. For example, he doesn’t focus when he’s bothering his friends.”

Table 2

Behavioural and Psychological Challenges	Strategies to Overcomes
A. Students’ Lateness	<div>1. Verbal warnings</div> <div>2. Disallowed late learners entering the class</div>
B. Students’ Lack of Participation to Speak	<div>1. Encouraging discussion</div> <div>2. Asking simple questions</div>
C. Students Stressed and Demotivated	<div>1. Integrating games</div> <div>2. Ice-breaking</div>

	activities
D. Disruptive Students	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Calling the student's name</li> <li>2. Move the student's seat</li> </ol>
E. Utilizing Mobile Media	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Giving detailed guidance</li> <li>2. Ask to learn with other students.</li> </ol>

In summary, EFL pre-service teachers face substantial psychological and behavioral obstacles during their teaching practicum, such as disruptive behavior, stress and demotivation, student tardiness, and challenges with mobile media. Classroom management and learning flow are disrupted by these issues. Empathetic responses, promoting participation, integrating engaging activities, maintaining classroom order, and providing clear instructions for mobile use are among the strategies that pre-service teachers employ to address these challenges. These techniques are consistent with well-established educational theories, which cultivate a structured and supportive learning environment that improves student engagement, motivation, and overall educational outcomes. A successful teaching practicum necessitates the effective administration of these challenges.

### **Contextual Challenges**

The last category only has 2 subthemes challenges that are related to Contextual Challenges. Based on all participants reported that both challenges are substantial challenges there are Classroom Hectic and time management. Some interviewees stated their opinions on this matter:

*T4: "If so, that's for sure, where the class is noisy, especially if you teach at junior high school. There's been a lot of excitement."*

T4: “This has happened to me, but not often, but it has.”

Table 3

Contextual Challenges	Strategies to Overcomes
A. Classroom Hectic	1. Attracting students' focus 2. Create study groups
B. Time Management	1. Assigned homework 2. Shorten the material

To summarize, EFL pre-service teachers face notable contextual challenges throughout their teaching practicum, such as handling challenging classroom settings and implementing efficient time management. The presence of loud noises and crowding might disturb the process of instruction, requiring the use of measures such as attention-calling, organizing study groups, and promoting peer learning. Efficient lesson planning is necessary due to limited time availability. This involves selecting important topics and finding a balance between in-class and out-of-class learning. These approaches are consistent with well-established educational theories, which prioritize the significance of efficient classroom management and time utilization. Through the use of these tactics, pre-service teachers can establish an environment that is favorable to learning and successfully attain educational objectives, even in the face of contextual obstacles.

Discussion

The researcher investigated the classroom management challenges faced by EFL pre-service teachers during their teaching practicum, focusing on instructional, behavioural, psychological, and contextual challenges. The study employed observation checklists and semi-structured interviews to gather comprehensive data from

participants. Drawing on Soleimani and Razmjoo's (2016) framework, the research identified key areas of difficulty and the strategies used to address them, providing a detailed discussion of each challenge.

Instructional challenges included managing uncompleted homework, dealing with learners' inconsistent abilities, encouraging English use over first-language speaking, managing materials and syllabus, and aligning teaching methods with learning outcomes. Uncompleted homework disrupts learning continuity, necessitating reminders and penalties to foster accountability. Variations in student abilities require diagnostic assessments and mixed-ability grouping to promote inclusive learning. Encouraging English use involves setting class agreements and motivational strategies. Balancing syllabus adherence with supplementary resources and continuous professional development helps manage materials effectively. Ensuring teaching methods align with learning objectives through adaptability and review ensures instructional effectiveness.

Behavioural and psychological challenges, such as student lateness, lack of participation, stress, demotivation, and disruptive behaviour, significantly impact classroom management. Addressing lateness involves understanding reasons, giving warnings, and cultivating responsibility. Encouraging participation in speaking requires creating an inclusive environment and using supportive measures. Reducing stress and increasing motivation can be achieved through educational games, ice-breaking activities, and fostering positive teacher-student relationships. Managing disruptive students involves calling names, asking relevant questions, and moving disruptive students to the front. Utilizing mobile media effectively necessitates clear guidelines, step-by-step instructions, and peer collaboration.

Contextual challenges include managing busy classroom environments and time management. Excessive noise and crowding disrupt instruction, requiring strategies like calling for attention, organizing study groups, and fostering an inclusive atmosphere. Effective time management involves providing homework, focusing on important points, and balancing in-class and out-of-class learning. This ensures critical components are covered, enhancing teaching efficiency and optimizing student understanding. These strategies align with educational theories emphasizing classroom management, time optimization, and creating a conducive learning environment.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study aimed to investigate the classroom management challenges encountered by EFL pre-service teachers during their teaching practicum and the strategies they employed to overcome these challenges. Utilizing observation checklists and semi-structured interviews, the research identified instructional, behavioural, psychological, and contextual challenges. Instructional challenges included managing uncompleted homework, addressing learners' inconsistent abilities, encouraging English use, managing materials and syllabi, and aligning teaching methods with outcomes. Strategies included verbal reminders, penalties, diagnostic assessments, mixed-ability grouping, class agreements, supplementary resources, and continuous review.

Behavioural and psychological challenges encompassed student lateness, lack of participation in speaking, stress and demotivation, disruptive behaviour, and utilizing mobile media. Pre-service teachers employed empathetic and disciplinary measures to manage lateness and encouraged participation through discussions and clear questions. To combat stress and demotivation, they integrated educational games and ice-breaking activities while fostering a supportive classroom environment. Managing disruptive students involved engaging strategies and structured use of mobile media, ensuring a focused and collaborative learning atmosphere.

Contextual challenges included managing hectic classroom environments and time management. Strategies to manage busy classrooms involved organizing study groups, promoting peer learning, and creating inclusive atmospheres. Effective time management was addressed through providing homework, focusing on key points, and planning. These adaptive strategies reflect the pre-service teachers' commitment to fostering a conducive learning environment. The study underscores the importance of flexible classroom management strategies and highlights the need for comprehensive teacher training. Future research could explore the long-term impact of these strategies on teaching effectiveness and student outcomes, enhancing the quality of education for EFL students.

Future research should prioritize exploring the long-term impact of strategies used in addressing classroom management challenges on student outcomes and teaching effectiveness. While the current study provides insights into the immediate strategies employed by EFL pre-service teachers, understanding the sustained effects of these

interventions is crucial. Investigating whether these classroom management techniques lead to lasting improvements in student engagement, behavior, and academic performance will provide valuable data on their efficacy. Longitudinal studies that follow students and teachers over extended periods could reveal whether initial gains are maintained and if certain strategies are more effective over time

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