

Fostering a Positive Learning Climate through Classroom Management: A Case Study from Rural Indonesian Elementary Education

Suci Anggraini¹, Manap Somantri¹, Azizatul Khairi¹

¹Universitas Bengkulu, Bengkulu, Indonesia

Corresponding author e-mail: sucichew88@gmail.com

Article History: Received on 15 June 2026, Revised on 11 July 2026,
Published on 4 August 2026

Abstract: This qualitative case study explored the implementation of positive learning climate-based classroom management at SD Negeri 4 Muara Rupit, a public elementary school in rural Indonesia. Participants included three classroom teachers, the school principal, two vice principals, and twelve students, selected purposively. Data were collected over three months through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and documentation analysis involving lesson plans, classroom rules, teaching modules, reflective notes, and photographs. Data analysis was conducted iteratively through coding, categorization, thematic display, and verification across data sources. Findings revealed that classroom management was implemented through four interconnected processes: systematic planning, interactive implementation, continuous evaluation, and adaptive strategies for addressing classroom challenges. Planning involved participatory classroom rules, flexible seating arrangements, supportive physical environments, and active learning strategies. Implementation was characterized by communicative teacher-student interaction, positive reinforcement, educative discipline, emotional support, and collaborative learning. Evaluation occurred continuously through teacher reflection and observation of student participation, interaction quality, and classroom atmosphere. Supporting factors included school leadership support, teacher collaboration, and cooperative student behavior, whereas inhibiting factors comprised diverse student characteristics and limited educational facilities. Despite these challenges, teachers demonstrated reflective and flexible practices that supported students' academic and socio-emotional development. The study concludes that positive learning climate-based classroom management contributes to safe, participatory, and supportive elementary classrooms. Limitations include the single-site design and limited student voice. The findings imply a need for professional development in reflective practice, positive discipline, and adaptive classroom management.

Keywords: Classroom Management, Elementary Education, Positive Discipline, Positive Learning Climate, Student Engagement

A. Introduction

Elementary education has a fundamental role in shaping students' character, attitudes, social habits, and basic academic competencies. Within this developmental stage, classroom learning is influenced not only by the quality of instructional content but also by the way teachers organize interactions, expectations, routines, and emotional experiences. Classroom management is therefore a central pedagogical component because it determines whether students can learn in an orderly, safe, and supportive environment (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020). Recent evidence indicates that effective classroom management is associated with stronger student engagement, constructive behavior, and academic success, while weak management can reduce learning time and intensify disruptive behavior.

Contemporary educational paradigms require teachers to move beyond teacher-centered instruction and behavior control. Teachers are expected to create participatory, inclusive, and emotionally supportive classrooms in which students can ask questions, express ideas, collaborate with peers, and develop responsibility (Sormunen et al., 2020). Nevertheless, classroom management remains challenging, particularly when students differ in concentration, readiness, participation, and behavioral needs. International studies show that punitive or inconsistent management may weaken classroom relationships, whereas clear expectations, positive behavioral support, and social-emotional strategies are associated with a more constructive classroom climate.

A positive learning climate refers to a classroom environment characterized by emotional safety, mutual respect, open communication, supportive teacher-student relationships, fair rules, and meaningful student participation. In such an environment, students feel accepted and psychologically safe enough to contribute without fear of humiliation or excessive punishment. Positive classroom and school climates have been linked to engagement, social-emotional competence, motivation, and stronger relationships among students and teachers. Reviews further indicate that the physical and social dimensions of the classroom environment jointly influence students' willingness to participate and persist in learning activities (Shang et al., 2023).

This study is informed by self-determination theory, which explains student motivation through the satisfaction of three basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. In classroom management, autonomy is supported when students are involved in formulating rules and expressing opinions; competence is strengthened through clear guidance, constructive feedback, and positive reinforcement; and relatedness develops through respectful, caring, and dependable relationships. Autonomy-supportive teaching has been shown to strengthen motivation and multiple dimensions of student engagement. Supportive

language and interaction also help students perceive the classroom as a place where their perspectives are valued rather than controlled (Guzzardo et al., 2021).

Although positive classroom climate has received substantial research attention, much of the literature has used surveys, correlational designs, intervention evaluations, or large-scale measurements. These studies explain relationships among classroom climate, behavior, engagement, and achievement, but provide less detail about how teachers integrate planning, interaction, discipline, reflection, and adaptation in everyday classroom practice. Qualitative evidence from rural Indonesian elementary schools is particularly limited, despite contextual challenges such as restricted facilities, diverse student needs, and uneven access to instructional resources. A case study can therefore provide contextualized evidence about the practices and decision-making processes through which teachers sustain a positive learning climate (Hammar Chiriac et al., 2023).

Preliminary observation at SD Negeri 4 Muara Rupit on January 19, 2026, showed that teachers had used classroom rules, seating arrangements, clear directions, polite communication, and verbal reinforcement. However, several students remained unfocused, passive during discussion, or inconsistent in collaborative activities. These conditions indicated a need to examine classroom management as an integrated and reflective process rather than as a collection of situational responses. Accordingly, this study addressed three questions: (1) How do teachers plan, implement, and evaluate positive learning climate-based classroom management? (2) What supporting and inhibiting factors influence its implementation? and (3) What strategies do teachers use to overcome classroom management challenges?

B. Methods

This study used a qualitative single-case study design to examine positive learning climate-based classroom management in its natural setting. The case was SD Negeri 4 Muara Rupit, a public elementary school in Lawang Agung Village, Rupit District, Musi Rawas Utara Regency, South Sumatra, Indonesia. The site was selected purposively because preliminary observation showed ongoing efforts to develop orderly, participatory, and emotionally supportive classrooms while the school also faced resource limitations and diverse student needs. Fieldwork was conducted over three months. The case study design enabled the researchers to examine classroom management as a contextual process involving instructional planning, social interaction, discipline, reflection, and school-level support (Thierry et al., 2022).

Participants were selected purposively according to their direct involvement in classroom management and their ability to provide relevant information. They comprised three classroom teachers (T1-T3), the school principal (P1), two vice principals (VP1-VP2), and twelve students (S1-S12). Teachers were the primary participants because they planned and implemented classroom management

practices. The principal and vice principals provided information about supervision, school policy, curriculum implementation, and professional support. Students provided perspectives on classroom comfort, safety, communication, participation, and teacher responses. Pseudonyms were used in field notes, transcripts, analytic matrices, and reporting to protect participant identities (Tamminen et al., 2021).

Table 1. Research Participants and Pseudonyms

No	Participant Group	Pseudonyms	n
1	Classroom teachers	T1-T3	3
2	School principal	P1	1
3	Vice principals	VP1-VP2	2
4	Students	S1-S12	12

Data were collected through classroom observation, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis. Repeated observations were distributed throughout the three-month fieldwork period, and each observation followed the complete duration of the lesson being observed. The observation guide focused on classroom rules, seating arrangements, teacher-student communication, disciplinary responses, reinforcement, emotional support, participation, peer interaction, and teacher adaptation. Detailed field notes were prepared immediately after each observation. Semi-structured interviews explored participants' experiences, strategies, perceptions, supporting conditions, barriers, and improvement efforts. Documents included lesson plans, teaching modules, displayed classroom rules, school regulations, teacher reflection notes, and photographs of learning activities. Using multiple techniques enabled the researchers to compare reported practices with observed classroom behavior and documentary evidence (Al-Hendawi et al., 2025).

The research instruments consisted of an observation guide, an interview protocol, a documentation checklist, and a field-note format. Instrument development was guided by the study questions and by conceptual dimensions of classroom management and positive learning climate: planning, implementation, evaluation, adaptation, emotional safety, interpersonal relationships, communication, student engagement, and positive discipline. The instruments functioned as flexible qualitative guides rather than standardized rating scales. Questions were open-ended so that participants could explain classroom events and decisions in detail (Possaghi et al., 2025). Child-sensitive prompts were used with students, and interviews were conducted in language appropriate to their age and level of understanding. Participatory and child-sensitive approaches were considered important for obtaining authentic perspectives without placing unnecessary pressure on student participants.

Data analysis was conducted concurrently with data collection. First, observation notes, interview records, and documents were organized by source and date. Second, the researchers read the data repeatedly and assigned initial codes to statements and events related to rules, physical arrangements, interaction, discipline, reinforcement, participation, reflection, support, barriers, and adaptive responses. Third, related

codes were grouped into categories and compared across teachers, students, school leaders, and data collection techniques. Fourth, categories were organized into four overarching themes: systematic planning, interactive implementation, continuous evaluation, and adaptive improvement. Thematic displays and comparison matrices were used to identify convergence, differences, and negative cases. Conclusions were refined continuously and retained only when supported by more than one source or technique (Fife & Gossner, 2024).

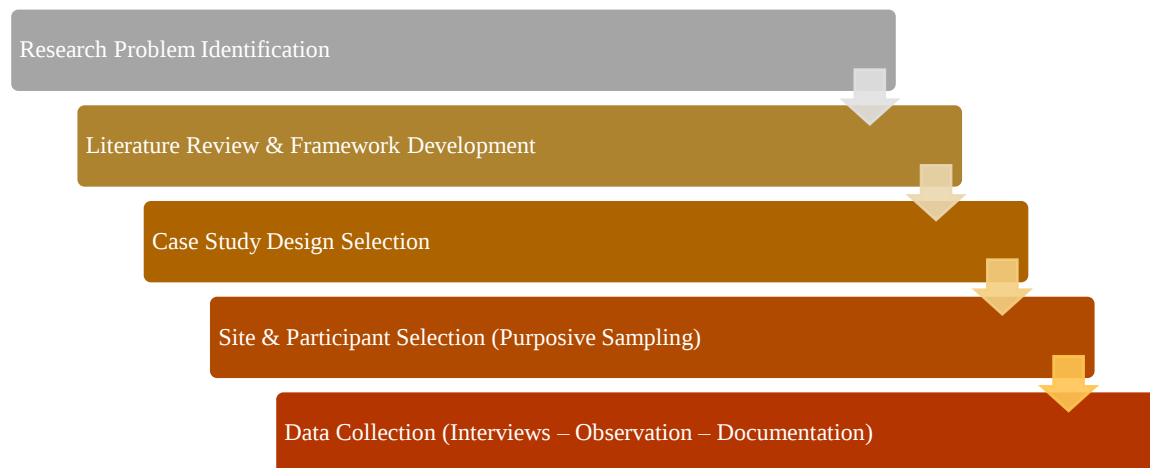


Figure 1. Methodological Flowchart

Trustworthiness was strengthened through source triangulation, technique triangulation, time comparison, member checking, and an audit trail. Teachers' explanations were compared with student perspectives, school-leader information, classroom observations, and documents. Preliminary interpretations were returned to key participants to confirm factual accuracy and reduce misinterpretation. The researchers also maintained records of observation dates, interview notes, coding decisions, thematic matrices, and revisions to interpretations. Ethical permission was obtained from the school before data collection. Participation was voluntary, student involvement was conducted with institutional and guardian approval, and identifying information was excluded from the report. These procedures supported the credibility, dependability, confirmability, and ethical integrity of the study (Enworo, 2023).

C. Results and Discussion

Result

This study was conducted at SD Negeri 4 Muara Rupit, located in Lawang Agung Village, Rupit District, Musi Rawas Utara Regency, South Sumatra, Indonesia. The school is a public elementary school operating under the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education. Based on the findings obtained through interviews, observations, and documentation, the study revealed various practices related to

positive learning climate-based classroom management implemented by teachers during classroom learning activities. The findings are presented according to the main focus of the study, namely classroom management planning, implementation, evaluation, supporting and inhibiting factors, and teachers' efforts to overcome classroom management barriers (Putra & Yanto, 2025).

The findings demonstrated that teachers at SD Negeri 4 Muara Rupit had implemented classroom management planning systematically at the beginning of the semester. Classroom management planning was conducted through the formulation of classroom rules and agreements, the arrangement of classroom environments, flexible seating arrangements, and the design of participatory learning strategies. Teachers attempted to create a learning atmosphere that was orderly, comfortable, and supportive of students' active participation in classroom learning.

Based on interview findings, teachers involved students in establishing classroom rules and agreements to foster students' sense of responsibility toward classroom discipline (Ibrahim & El Zataari, 2020). The classroom rules included maintaining classroom cleanliness, listening attentively during lessons, respecting classmates' opinions, and participating actively in classroom activities. The participatory formulation of classroom agreements enabled students to feel involved in maintaining a conducive classroom atmosphere. This finding indicates that teachers not only emphasized classroom discipline but also promoted democratic interaction and shared responsibility among students.

The physical arrangement of the classroom was also designed to support the development of a positive learning climate (Niemi, 2021). The classroom walls were decorated with students' work, educational posters, and learning displays that created a more attractive and motivating learning environment. Teachers believed that displaying students' work could increase students' confidence and sense of appreciation. In addition, teachers regularly encouraged students to maintain classroom cleanliness and organization collectively.

Table 3. Planning Practices of Positive Learning Climate Based Classroom Management

Planning Aspects	Classroom Practices	Educational Purpose
Classroom Rules	Joint formulation of classroom agreements	Building responsibility and discipline
Physical Environment	Displaying students' work and learning posters	Increasing learning motivation
Seating Arrangement	Flexible group and semicircle seating	Supporting interaction and collaboration
Learning Strategy	Group discussion, question-answer sessions, presentations	Encouraging active participation
Positive Reinforcement	Verbal appreciation and motivational support	Increasing student confidence

The findings further revealed that seating arrangements were implemented flexibly according to classroom learning activities (Larose et al., 2024). Teachers arranged seating in groups during collaborative learning and discussions, while individual row arrangements were used during explanation sessions to maintain students' focus. Flexible seating arrangements enabled students to interact more actively with peers and facilitated teachers' supervision during classroom learning. Observational findings showed that classroom layouts were dynamic and adapted to students' needs and instructional objectives.



Figure 2. Classroom Learning Activities at SD Negeri 4 Muara Rupit

Figure 2 illustrates classroom learning activities characterized by active student engagement and collaborative interaction. The images show that students participated in group discussions and collaborative learning activities arranged through flexible classroom management strategies. The classroom atmosphere appeared relatively conducive, communicative, and participatory, reflecting the implementation of positive learning climate principles during the learning process (Kuzle, 2023). The observation findings also indicated that teachers implemented various seating arrangements to support different learning objectives. Group seating arrangements facilitated collaboration and discussion among students, while semicircle seating encouraged communication and whole-class interaction. Individual seating arrangements were used to support concentration during independent learning tasks (Kim & Yang, 2022). These findings indicate that classroom seating management was implemented not merely for organizational purposes but also as a pedagogical strategy to create active learning environments.

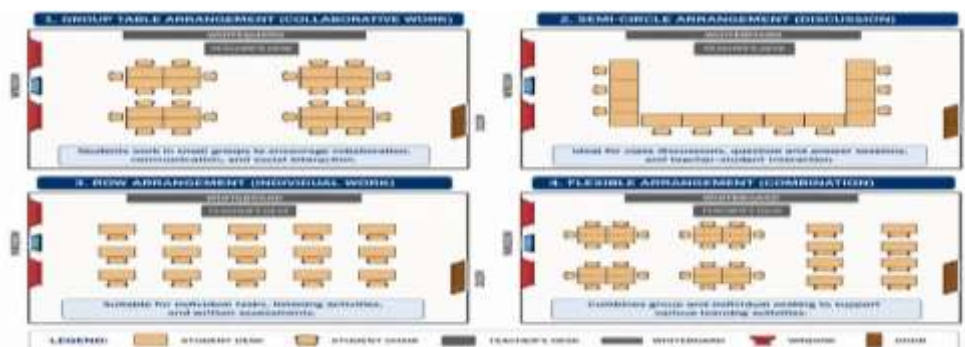


Figure 3. Classroom Seating Arrangement Design at SD Negeri 4 Muara Rupit

Figure 3 presents several classroom seating arrangement models implemented at SD Negeri 4 Muara Rupit. The arrangements include group seating, semicircle discussion seating, individual row seating, and flexible combination seating. These seating patterns were adjusted according to instructional objectives and students' learning needs. Flexible classroom layouts supported active learning, improved communication among students, and facilitated teachers in monitoring classroom activities effectively (Johnson et al., 2021).

Table 4. Classroom Seating Arrangement Models and Functions

Seating Model	Characteristics	Learning Function
Group Seating	Students sit in collaborative groups	Supporting teamwork and discussion
Semicircle Seating	Students face each other and the teacher	Facilitating discussion and communication
Individual Row Seating	Students sit individually in rows	Increasing concentration and discipline
Flexible Combination Seating	Combination of group and individual seating	Adjusting to diverse learning activities

The implementation of positive learning climate-based classroom management was reflected in teachers' efforts to establish active and respectful classroom interaction. During classroom instruction, teachers encouraged students to ask questions, express opinions, and participate actively in discussions. Interview findings indicated that teachers viewed communication and interaction as important components of creating comfortable and engaging learning environments. Teachers attempted to involve students continuously during classroom learning rather than relying solely on teacher-centered instruction (Woods & Copur-Gencturk, 2024).

Observational findings showed that teachers used polite and supportive language during instruction. Students were encouraged to speak without fear of making mistakes, and teachers responded positively to students' answers even when responses were incomplete or inaccurate. This communication pattern created an emotionally supportive atmosphere that encouraged students to participate more confidently in classroom activities.

Positive discipline was also implemented consistently during classroom learning. Teachers did not apply harsh punishment but instead used persuasive and educative approaches when students displayed disruptive behavior. For example, when students talked during explanations or lost focus, teachers reminded them politely and redirected their attention toward learning activities. This approach reflected the implementation of positive discipline principles aimed at guiding rather than punishing students.

Teachers also provided positive reinforcement to students who demonstrated constructive learning behavior. Reinforcement was delivered through verbal praise, applause, appreciation, and motivational encouragement. Teachers believed that positive reinforcement increased students' motivation and confidence in participating during classroom learning. Students who answered questions, helped peers, or actively participated in discussions often received appreciation from teachers (Zou et al., 2023).

Table 5. Implementation of Positive Learning Climate-Based Classroom Management

Classroom Management Practices	Implementation Findings
Active Teacher-Student Interaction	Students participated in questioning and discussion activities
Open Communication	Teachers used supportive and respectful language
Positive Discipline	Teachers applied persuasive and educative discipline approaches
Positive Reinforcement	Teachers provided praise and appreciation for positive behavior
Collaborative Learning	Students engaged in group discussions and teamwork
Safe Learning Environment	Students felt comfortable expressing opinions in class

The findings further revealed that teachers attempted to create safe and emotionally supportive learning environments by promoting mutual respect among students. Teachers consistently reminded students not to mock or insult peers during classroom activities. Such practices contributed to the development of emotionally secure learning environments where students felt more comfortable participating in learning activities. The evaluation of positive learning climate-based classroom management was conducted continuously through teacher reflection and observation of classroom learning dynamics. Teachers evaluated classroom management effectiveness by observing students' participation, classroom atmosphere, interaction quality, and students' responses during learning activities. Teachers considered active participation and comfortable classroom conditions as indicators of successful classroom management. Interview findings indicated that teachers regularly reflected on learning activities after classroom instruction. Reflection enabled teachers to identify weaknesses in classroom management practices and improve future instructional strategies. Teachers adjusted learning methods and activities when students appeared less engaged or when classroom learning became less effective (Cents-Boonstra et al., 2021).

Table 6. Evaluation Practices of Classroom Management

Evaluation Indicators	Evaluation Activities
Student Participation	Observing students' engagement during learning
Classroom Atmosphere	Assessing comfort, orderliness, and interaction
Learning Effectiveness	Reflecting on students' responses and understanding
Teacher Reflection	Reviewing strengths and weaknesses of instruction
Instructional Improvement	Modifying strategies for subsequent lessons

The findings also identified several supporting and inhibiting factors influencing the implementation of positive learning climate-based classroom management. Supporting factors included support from the school principal, collaboration among teachers, positive school culture, and cooperative student behavior. The school principal regularly encouraged teachers to improve classroom learning quality through supervision and professional discussions. Teachers also collaborated by sharing experiences and discussing classroom management strategies. However, several inhibiting factors were also identified. One major challenge involved differences in students' characteristics, including varying levels of participation, concentration, learning ability, and classroom behavior. Some students were highly active during learning activities, while others tended to remain passive or lose focus during lessons. These differences required teachers to continuously adapt instructional strategies according to classroom conditions. Another challenge involved limited school facilities and infrastructure. The school lacked several supporting facilities such as laboratories, libraries, and internet access. Consequently, teachers relied primarily on textbooks, whiteboards, and simple instructional media during classroom instruction. Despite these limitations, teachers attempted to maximize available resources to support learning activities (Damşa et al., 2021).

Table 7. Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in Classroom Management

Supporting Factors	Inhibiting Factors
Principal support and supervision	Differences in student characteristics
Collaboration among teachers	Passive and disruptive student behavior
Positive school culture	Limited learning facilities
Cooperative student participation	Lack of educational infrastructure
Teacher reflection and adaptation	Limited instructional resources

Teachers implemented various strategies to overcome classroom management barriers and maintain positive classroom climates. One important strategy involved modifying instructional approaches according to classroom situations. When students appeared bored or distracted, teachers changed instructional activities by incorporating group discussions, games, questioning activities, or collaborative tasks to regain students' attention. Teachers also applied personal communication approaches to students experiencing learning difficulties or behavioral challenges. Rather than publicly reprimanding students, teachers preferred private conversations to understand students' problems and provide guidance. This approach helped maintain positive teacher-student relationships while addressing classroom management issues more effectively. Support from school leadership also played an important role in helping teachers address classroom management challenges. The school principal conducted regular supervision activities and encouraged teachers to share experiences during teacher meetings. Such institutional support enabled teachers to develop more effective classroom management practices collaboratively. In addition, teachers continuously reflected on classroom experiences to improve subsequent learning activities. Reflection became an important process for identifying effective strategies and adjusting instructional approaches according to students'

learning needs. These findings indicate that classroom management was viewed as a dynamic and ongoing process requiring flexibility, collaboration, and continuous professional reflection (Gold et al., 2021).

Table 8. Teachers' Strategies for Overcoming Classroom Management Challenges

Challenges	Teacher Strategies
Students losing focus	Changing instructional activities and methods
Passive student participation	Encouraging discussion and collaborative learning
Disruptive classroom behavior	Applying personal communication and guidance
Limited learning resources	Maximizing available teaching media
Diverse student characteristics	Adapting instructional strategies flexibly

The observation findings strengthened interview and documentation results regarding the implementation of positive learning climate-based classroom management. Observations conducted during classroom learning activities showed that teachers consistently applied interactive communication, positive reinforcement, flexible seating arrangements, and educative discipline practices. The classroom atmosphere generally appeared orderly, communicative, and conducive to student participation. Documentation findings also supported these results. Classroom documents included classroom rules displayed on classroom walls, teaching modules aligned with the Merdeka Curriculum, school regulations, and teacher reflection notes. These documents indicated that classroom management practices were planned systematically and implemented consistently to support positive learning climates (Khalfaoui et al., 2021).

The triangulation process conducted through interviews, observations, and documentation demonstrated strong consistency among data sources. Interview findings regarding classroom rules, positive communication, active learning strategies, and reflective evaluation were supported by observational evidence and documentation data. This consistency strengthened the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings. Overall, the findings indicate that positive learning climate-based classroom management at SD Negeri 4 Muara Rupit has been implemented through systematic planning, interactive instructional practices, continuous evaluation, collaborative support systems, and reflective improvement efforts. Teachers attempted to create learning environments that were comfortable, participatory, respectful, and emotionally supportive despite various classroom challenges and limitations. These findings suggest that positive learning climate-based classroom management plays an important role in supporting conducive learning processes and improving student participation in elementary school classrooms (Rohatgi et al., 2022).

Discussion

The findings show that positive learning climate-based classroom management was not a single technique but an integrated cycle of planning, interaction, evaluation, and

adaptation. Teachers established expectations and learning arrangements before instruction, enacted them through supportive communication and positive discipline, evaluated classroom responses, and modified subsequent practice. This cyclical pattern extends the view of classroom management beyond behavior control and supports recent evidence that effective management involves context-sensitive professional decisions linked to student engagement and learning (Dang et al., 2025).

Participatory rule-setting was a central mechanism for creating order without relying primarily on control. By involving students in classroom agreements, teachers gave them a meaningful role in defining acceptable behavior and collective responsibility. This finding is consistent with research on primary classroom rules and autonomy-supportive teaching, which shows that students are more willing to engage when expectations are understandable, fair, and connected to their own participation. It also aligns with evidence that positive classroom climates support motivation and engagement through students' sense of agency (Namaziandost et al., 2024).

Positive reinforcement supported students' need for competence. Teachers used praise, applause, encouragement, and constructive responses to incomplete answers, enabling students to experience progress rather than embarrassment. International findings similarly distinguish positive and social-emotional management practices from punitive styles, with positive approaches associated with a more favorable school climate. Encouragement, redirection, and logical consequences can address student misbehavior while preserving positive learning relationships. In the present study, reinforcement therefore functioned as both behavioral guidance and emotional support, consistent with research emphasizing teacher empathy and social-emotional learning experiences (Hosokawa et al., 2024).



Figure 4. Positive Learning Climate-Based Classroom Management Model

Supportive teacher-student relationships addressed the need for relatedness. Teachers used polite language, listened to students, prevented peer ridicule, and preferred private guidance to public reprimand. These practices created relational safety and helped students participate without fear of humiliation. This pattern is consistent with international research linking relationship quality to engagement, social-emotional development, and school adjustment. The reciprocal relationship model suggests that teacher and student behavior continuously influence one another, explaining why respectful responses can gradually strengthen constructive classroom behavior (Osher et al., 2020).

Emotional safety emerged as a practical classroom condition rather than an abstract school value. Teachers attempted to ensure that mistakes were treated as part of learning and that students' opinions were respected. Safe learning environments in primary education are characterized by predictable expectations, respectful communication, and active involvement, even when schools use different instructional models. The present findings also support conceptual work emphasizing that positive school climate must be sustained through relationships, participation, and shared responsibility rather than through physical order alone (Koh et al., 2023).

Flexible seating arrangements connected the physical environment with instructional purpose. Group seating supported collaboration, semicircle arrangements facilitated whole-class communication, and individual rows were used when concentration was required. The value of these arrangements depended on how teachers linked space to learning activity, supervision, and interaction. Reviews of classroom environment research similarly show that physical organization can influence participation and engagement when it is integrated with clear instructional goals. The active participation observed in this study also parallels international intervention research that treats student voice and collaborative activity as components of an engaging classroom climate (Berti et al., 2023).

The use of educative discipline was particularly important because the school faced differences in student concentration and behavior. Teachers redirected attention, changed activities, and spoke individually with students rather than immediately using harsh punishment. This finding is compatible with positive behavior support research, which emphasizes explicit expectations, consistent feedback, and supportive responses to behavioral difficulties (Bosmans et al., 2022). Evidence from elementary classrooms also indicates that clear expectations, perceptions of fairness, positive feedback, and strong student relationships predict a better behavioral climate.

Continuous evaluation differentiated the observed practices from purely reactive management. Teachers judged classroom management through participation, comfort, orderliness, interaction quality, and student response, then reflected on what should be changed. Reflective practice has been associated with improved pedagogical skill, confidence, and readiness for diverse classroom situations.

Indonesian evidence also shows that individual and collaborative reflection can strengthen teachers' capacity to interpret classroom experience and revise instruction systematically. Thus, reflection served as the bridge between evaluation and adaptive improvement (Ng et al., 2022).

School leadership and teacher collaboration strengthened implementation. Principal supervision, professional discussion, and peer exchange gave teachers opportunities to examine classroom problems collectively rather than working in isolation. This result is consistent with evidence that leader support is related to teacher self-efficacy and classroom emotional climate in elementary schools. Collaborative professional learning also helps teachers create space for critical reflection and shared problem-solving, while teacher collaboration can be especially valuable when tasks and roles are clearly structured (Liu et al., 2024).

The rural and resource-limited context adds an important contextual contribution. The school lacked several facilities, including a laboratory, a library, and reliable internet access, yet teachers still created participatory and emotionally supportive learning through communication, classroom organization, locally available materials, and flexible methods. This finding suggests that positive climate development does not depend solely on sophisticated facilities. Resources remain important, but the pedagogical use of available space, materials, routines, and relationships can partially offset material constraints. The result also cautions against treating technology access as the primary determinant of classroom quality (Liu et al., 2024).

The findings provide explicit support for self-determination theory. Autonomy was fostered through participatory rules, opportunities to speak, and involvement in group decisions. Competence was supported through clear expectations, differentiated activities, encouragement, and constructive feedback. Relatedness was strengthened through respectful communication, emotional protection, and personal guidance. When these needs were addressed together, students were more willing to participate and display constructive behavior. The study therefore shows how self-determination theory can be translated into concrete classroom management practices rather than being applied only as a general motivational explanation (Martela et al., 2021).

Figure 4 synthesizes the study's theoretical contribution. The model positions a positive learning climate at the center of a continuing cycle of planning, implementation, evaluation, and follow-up. Supporting factors such as leadership, collaboration, resources, and school culture influence the cycle, while challenges require adaptive responses. The model extends existing classroom management perspectives by identifying reflective evaluation as the mechanism that keeps management responsive to changing student needs. It also demonstrates that emotional safety, positive relationships, open communication, recognition, and

engagement are not separate outcomes; they are mutually reinforcing dimensions of the management process (Dhir & Vallabh, 2025).

Several practical implications follow. Teachers should co-create a small number of observable classroom agreements, align seating with learning purposes, use specific rather than generic praise, redirect misbehavior privately when possible, and record short reflections after lessons. School leaders should use supervision as coaching, organize regular case discussions among teachers, and prioritize low-cost improvements to learning spaces and instructional materials. Teacher education programs should include practical training in autonomy-supportive communication, positive discipline, emotional safety, flexible classroom organization, and evidence-based reflection. These recommendations are more actionable than general calls for a positive classroom atmosphere because they specify routines that can be incorporated into daily instruction (Varkey et al., 2023).

The study has limitations. It examined one school, so the findings are context-bound and cannot be generalized statistically. Student voice was included but remained less extensive than teacher and leadership perspectives. The study did not use a longitudinal design or a validated observational scale to measure changes in classroom climate, such as contemporary classroom-management assessment approaches, and participant responses may have been influenced by social desirability or researcher presence. Future research should compare urban, rural, private, public, and madrasah contexts; involve students through more participatory methods; examine the sustainability of practices longitudinally; and develop observational instruments that integrate autonomy, competence, relatedness, emotional safety, discipline, and reflective adaptation.

D. Conclusions

This qualitative case study examined the implementation of positive learning climate-based classroom management at SD Negeri 4 Muara Rupit, a public elementary school in rural Indonesia. The findings demonstrate that classroom management was implemented through four interconnected processes: systematic planning, interactive implementation, continuous evaluation, and adaptive improvement. Planning involved participatory classroom rules, flexible seating, supportive physical environments, and active learning strategies. Implementation was characterized by communicative interaction, positive reinforcement, educative discipline, emotional support, and collaborative learning. Evaluation occurred through teacher reflection and observation of participation, interaction, and classroom atmosphere, while adaptive strategies addressed diverse student characteristics and limited facilities. The study makes three contributions. First, it provides empirical evidence that classroom management extends beyond behavioral control to include emotional support, participation, relationships, and reflective practice. Second, the findings support self-determination theory by showing that autonomy is promoted through participatory

rule-setting and student voice, competence through encouragement and constructive feedback, and relatedness through supportive teacher-student relationships. Third, the study demonstrates that a positive classroom climate can be developed in a resource-limited rural school through pedagogical commitment, empathetic communication, flexible organization, and continuous reflection rather than through physical facilities alone. Practically, teachers should integrate participatory rules, purposeful seating, positive reinforcement, private redirection, and short reflective evaluation into daily practice. School leaders should provide constructive supervision and collaborative professional development focused on classroom management, while teacher education programs should emphasize positive discipline, emotional support, autonomy-supportive communication, and reflective teaching. The study is limited by its single-site design, relatively limited student voice, and absence of longitudinal or standardized observational measurement. Future studies should compare diverse Indonesian school contexts, involve students more systematically, examine sustainability over time, and develop validated observational instruments for positive learning climate-based classroom management.

E. Acknowledgement

We sincerely thank the principal, vice principals, teachers, staff, students, and families of SD Negeri 4 Muara Rupit for their cooperation, openness, and participation throughout the research process. We also express our gratitude to the lecturers of the Master of Educational Management Program, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Bengkulu, for their academic guidance, constructive feedback, and continuous encouragement during the preparation of this article. Finally, we thank all parties who contributed directly or indirectly to the completion of this study.

References

- Al-Hendawi, M., Hussein, E., & Darwish, S. (2025). Direct observation systems for child behavior assessment in early childhood education: a systematic literature review. *Discover Mental Health*, 5(1). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s44192-025-00139-z>
- Berti, S., Grazia, V., & Molinari, L. (2023). Active Student Participation in Whole-School Interventions in Secondary School. A Systematic Literature Review. *Educational Psychology Review*, 35(2), 1-27. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-023-09773-x>
- Bosmans, G., Van Vlierberghe, L., Bakermans-Kranenburg, M. J., Kobak, R., Hermans, D., & van IJzendoorn, M. H. (2022). A Learning Theory Approach to Attachment Theory: Exploring Clinical Applications. *Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review*, 25(3), 591-612. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10567-021-00377-x>
- Cents-Boonstra, M., Lichtwarck-Aschoff, A., Denessen, E., Aelterman, N., & Haerens, L. (2021). Fostering student engagement with motivating teaching: an observation study of teacher and student behaviours. *Research Papers in Education*, 36(6), 754-779. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02671522.2020.1767184>

- Damşa, C., Langford, M., Uehara, D., & Scherer, R. (2021). Teachers' agency and online education in times of crisis. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 121(March). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2021.106793>
- Dang, C., Le, K. M. A., & Nguyen, C. (2025). Context-responsive leadership in Vietnam: supporting students' postsecondary education and career opportunities. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 00(00), 1-30. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603124.2025.2572729>
- Darling-Hammond, L., Flook, L., Cook-Harvey, C., Barron, B., & Osher, D. (2020). Implications for educational practice of the science of learning and development. *Applied Developmental Science*, 24(2), 97-140. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10888691.2018.1537791>
- Dhir, S., & Vallabh, P. (2025). Do social relationships at work enhance creativity and innovative behavior? Role of psychological safety. *Acta Psychologica*, 253(December 2024), 104751. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.actpsy.2025.104751>
- Enworo, O. C. (2023). Application of Guba and Lincoln's parallel criteria to assess trustworthiness of qualitative research on indigenous social protection systems. *Qualitative Research Journal*, 23(4), 372-384. <https://doi.org/10.1108/QRJ-08-2022-0116>
- Fife, S. T., & Gossner, J. D. (2024). Deductive Qualitative Analysis: Evaluating, Expanding, and Refining Theory. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 23, 1-12. <https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069241244856>
- Gold, B., Pfirrmann, C., & Holodynski, M. (2021). Promoting Professional Vision of Classroom Management Through Different Analytic Perspectives in Video-Based Learning Environments. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 72(4), 431-447. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487120963681>
- Guzzardo, M. T., Khosla, N., Adams, A. L., Bussmann, J. D., Engelman, A., Ingraham, N., Gamba, R., Jones-Bey, A., Moore, M. D., Toosi, N. R., & Taylor, S. (2021). "The Ones that Care Make all the Difference": Perspectives on Student-Faculty Relationships. *Innovative Higher Education*, 46(1), 41-58. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10755-020-09522-w>
- Hammar Chiriach, E., Forsberg, C., & Thornberg, R. (2023). Teachers' perspectives on factors influencing the school climate: A constructivist grounded theory case study. *Cogent Education*, 10(2). <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2023.2245171>
- Hosokawa, R., Matsumoto, Y., Nishida, C., Funato, K., & Mitani, A. (2024). Enhancing social-emotional skills in early childhood: intervention study on the effectiveness of social and emotional learning. *BMC Psychology*, 12(1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40359-024-02280-w>
- Ibrahim, A., & El Zataari, W. (2020). The teacher-student relationship and adolescents' sense of school belonging. *International Journal of Adolescence and Youth*, 25(1), 382-395. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02673843.2019.1660998>
- Johnson, A. W., Su, M. P., Blackburn, M. W., & Finelli, C. J. (2021). Instructor use of a flexible classroom to facilitate active learning in undergraduate engineering courses. *European Journal of Engineering Education*, 46(4), 618-635. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03043797.2020.1865878>

- Khalfaoui, A., García-Carrión, R., & Villardón-Gallego, L. (2021). A Systematic Review of the Literature on Aspects Affecting Positive Classroom Climate in Multicultural Early Childhood Education. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 49(1), 71–81. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-020-01054-4>
- Kim, Y., & Yang, E. (2022). Academic library spaces and student activities during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 48(4), 102529. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.acalib.2022.102529>
- Koh, G. A., Askill-Williams, H., & Barr, S. (2023). Sustaining school improvement initiatives: advice from educational leaders. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, 34(3), 298–330. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09243453.2023.2190130>
- Kuzle, A. (2023). Elementary school children’s perceptions of geometry classroom as a psychosocial learning environment: an analysis of participant-produced drawings. *Learning Environments Research*, 26(2), 379–399. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10984-022-09430-0>
- Larose, D., Massie, C. L., St-Aubin, A., Boulay-Pelletier, V., Boulanger, E., Lavoie, M. D., Yessis, J., Tremblay, A., & Drapeau, V. (2024). Effects of flexible learning spaces, active breaks, and active lessons on sedentary behaviors, physical activity, learning, and musculoskeletal health in school-aged children: a scoping review. *Journal of Activity, Sedentary and Sleep Behaviors*, 3(1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s44167-024-00068-2>
- Liu, M., Hedges, H., & Cooper, M. (2024). Effective collaborative learning for early childhood teachers: structural, motivational and sustainable features. *Professional Development in Education*, 50(2), 420–438. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19415257.2023.2235578>
- Martela, F., Hankonen, N., Ryan, R. M., & Vansteenkiste, M. (2021). Motivating voluntary compliance to behavioural restrictions: Self-determination theory-based checklist of principles for COVID-19 and other emergency communications. *European Review of Social Psychology*, 32(2), 305–347. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10463283.2020.1857082>
- Namaziandost, E., Kargar Behbahani, H., & Heydarnejad, T. (2024). Tapping the alphabets of learning-oriented assessment: self-assessment, classroom climate, mindsets, trait emotional intelligence, and academic engagement are in focus. *Language Testing in Asia*, 14(1), 1–30. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40468-024-00293-1>
- Ng, S. L., Forsey, J., Boyd, V. A., Friesen, F., Langlois, S., Ladonna, K., Mylopoulos, M., & Steenhof, N. (2022). Combining adaptive expertise and (critically) reflective practice to support the development of knowledge, skill, and society. *Advances in Health Sciences Education*, 27(5), 1265–1281. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10459-022-10178-8>
- Niemi, K. (2021). ‘The best guess for the future?’ Teachers’ adaptation to open and flexible learning environments in Finland. *Education Inquiry*, 12(3), 282–300. <https://doi.org/10.1080/20004508.2020.1816371>
- Osher, D., Cantor, P., Berg, J., Steyer, L., & Rose, T. (2020). Drivers of human development: How relationships and context shape learning and development1.

- Applied Developmental Science*, 24(1), 6–36.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10888691.2017.1398650>
- Possaghi, I., Vesin, B., Zhang, F., Sharma, K., Knudsen, C., Bjørkum, H., & Papavlasopoulou, S. (2025). Integrating multi-modal learning analytics dashboard in K-12 education: insights for enhancing orchestration and teacher decision-making. *Smart Learning Environments*, 12(1).
<https://doi.org/10.1186/s40561-025-00410-4>
- Putra, E., & Yanto, M. (2025). Classroom management: boosting student success – a meta-analysis review. *Cogent Education*, 12(1).
<https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2025.2458630>
- Rohatgi, A., Hatlevik, O. E., & Björnsson, J. K. (2022). Supportive climates and science achievement in the Nordic countries: lessons learned from the 2015 PISA study. *Large-Scale Assessments in Education*, 10(1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40536-022-00123-x>
- Shang, C., Moss, A. C., & Chen, A. (2023). The expectancy-value theory: A meta-analysis of its application in physical education. *Journal of Sport and Health Science*, 12(1), 52–64. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jshs.2022.01.003>
- Sormunen, K., Juuti, K., & Lavonen, J. (2020). Maker-Centered Project-Based Learning in Inclusive Classes: Supporting Students' Active Participation with Teacher-Directed Reflective Discussions. *International Journal of Science and Mathematics Education*, 18(4), 691–712. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10763-019-09998-9>
- Tamminen, K. A., Bundon, A., Smith, B., McDonough, M. H., Poucher, Z. A., & Atkinson, M. (2021). Considerations for making informed choices about engaging in open qualitative research. *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health*, 13(5), 864–886. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2159676X.2021.1901138>
- Thierry, K., Vincent, R., Norris, K., & Dawson, O. (2022). Improving School Readiness for a Social Emotional Learning Curriculum: Case Study of a School-Mental Health Agency Partnership. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education*, 36(3), 483–505. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02568543.2021.1960938>
- Varkey, T. C., Varkey, J. A., Ding, J. B., Varkey, P. K., Zeitler, C., Nguyen, A. M., Merhavy, Z. I., & Thomas, C. R. (2023). Asynchronous learning: a general review of best practices for the 21st century. *Journal of Research in Innovative Teaching and Learning*, 16(1), 4–16. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JRIT-06-2022-0036>
- Woods, P. J., & Copur-Gencturk, Y. (2024). Examining the role of student-centered versus teacher-centered pedagogical approaches to self-directed learning through teaching. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 138(August 2023), 104415. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2023.104415>
- Zou, D., Xie, H., & Wang, F. L. (2023). Effects of technology enhanced peer, teacher and self-feedback on students' collaborative writing, critical thinking tendency and engagement in learning. *Journal of Computing in Higher Education*, 35(1), 166–185. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12528-022-09337-y>