

Pre-service teachers' classroom management strategies: An experience on teaching internship program

¹Nila Hidayatul Rohmita*, ¹Mega Mulianing Maharani, ¹Elok Widiyati, ¹Nur Ekaningsih

¹English Education Study Program, Faculty of Languages, Literature, and Culture, Universitas Islam Sultan Agung, Indonesia

***Corresponding Author**

Email: nilahr@std.unissula.ac.id

Abstract

This study investigated pre-service teachers' classroom management strategies as experienced during the teaching internship program. The teaching internship is a crucial component of pre-service teacher education designed to bridge theoretical knowledge with practical classroom experience. Previous studies have widely examined the development of pedagogical competence during internships; however, limited attention has been given to specific classroom management strategies, particularly in the TEYL context. Addressing this gap, this study explored how pre-service teachers managed classroom interactions and implemented effective strategies during their internship experiences. A quantitative descriptive survey design was employed to collect data from 13 pre-service teachers from the English Education Study Program who had completed their internships. Data were gathered using a closed-ended questionnaire validated by experts and tested for reliability using Cronbach's Alpha through SPSS, which yielded a value of 0.967, indicating very high internal consistency. The data were analyzed descriptively using percentages to identify dominant perceptions. The findings showed that classroom activity management obtained the highest average score of 69.2%, followed by physical environment management 58.93%, and psycho-social management 51.3%. Overall, the findings indicate that the teaching internship program effectively supported the development of pre-service teachers' classroom management strategies, particularly in managing learning activities and classroom interactions in the TEYL context.

Keywords: classroom management strategies; preservice teachers'; teaching internship program; TEYL

INTRODUCTION

Pre-service teacher education programs play a crucial role in preparing teachers with the necessary skills and attitudes. Among Pre-service teacher education programs, the teaching internship is considered a vital component for bridging theoretical knowledge with practical classroom experience (Tekin & Baykara, 2023). During the internship, pre-service teachers are trained to design age-appropriate and interactive lesson plans by considering students' cognitive and emotional development. Practical experience and mentoring also help them address challenges, such as limited English proficiency and the need for innovative teaching strategies (Pusparini et al., 2025). Effective and structured mentoring plays an essential role in helping pre-service teachers build confidence in handling diverse classroom dynamics and in adapting to young learners' needs, ensuring that they can apply theory into practice more effectively (Jita and Munje, 2021). This preparation allows them to build an early foundation of essential TEYL skills, including motivating young learners, managing diverse classroom behaviors, and integrating creativity into teaching practices (Fadhilah et al., 2024). Through this internship, pre-service teachers gain valuable opportunities to apply teaching strategies learned in college, forming a solid foundation for their professional growth as future educators.

The teaching internship allows pre-service teachers to gain first-hand experience in classroom settings, enabling them to apply teaching strategies, manage classroom interactions, and adapt their lesson plans to meet the unique characteristics of young learners. Through this process,

they are expected to develop essential TEYL competencies, such as using age-appropriate language, integrating play-based learning, and fostering motivation in young students. According to Cai et al., (2022), internships significantly influence the development of professional identity and teaching efficacy, which are critical in shaping a teacher's confidence and long-term commitment to the profession. Additionally, Taufik et al. (2025) reported that pre-service teachers experienced higher teaching efficacy after participating in internship programs, particularly in classroom management and instructional delivery. Teaching internships gave pre-service teachers the opportunity to practice the strategies they had learned and to face real classroom situations, which in turn strengthened their professional competence (Ghufron, 2024). Similarly, insights from pre-service teachers' experiences indicate that internship participation enhances motivation and strengthens their professional identity in TEYL contexts (Setyaningrum et al., 2022).

Classroom management is one of the essential teaching skills that must be mastered during internship experiences, as it directly affects the learning atmosphere and students' engagement in the classroom. Pre-service teachers often possess adequate theoretical knowledge of classroom management but still require practical exposure to effectively implement it in real classroom contexts (Zulkifli et al., 2019). During teaching practice, they also face various challenges—such as maintaining student discipline and managing time efficiently—which push them to develop adaptive strategies that fit diverse classroom conditions (Saleh et al., 2025). Therefore, the ability to manage both student behavior and instructional flow becomes a vital component supporting the successful teaching of young learners. Developing these competencies through real classroom experiences allows pre-service teachers to refine their management approaches, promoting both confidence and professional readiness before entering the teaching profession.

Teaching internships provide prospective teachers with the opportunity to gain hands-on experience in classroom management, implementing learning strategies, and adapting lesson plans to the characteristics of young children. Based on Soraya et al., (2022), classroom management in TEYL teaching consists of three main aspects. The physical environment aspect includes seating arrangements that support interaction, lighting, sound quality, classroom comfort, and the use of whiteboards and classroom equipment to support the learning process. The psycho-social management aspect includes establishing clear classroom rules, providing constructive feedback, and giving rewards as motivation for students. Meanwhile, the classroom activity management aspect focuses on effective management of learning time, utilization of various work patterns such as individual, paired, and group work, and supervision of student activities to ensure that the learning process runs smoothly. These three aspects support each other in creating a conducive and effective learning environment for the development of TEYL competencies in prospective teachers. Furthermore, reflective journaling during teaching internships has been shown to improve pre-service teachers' self-awareness and teaching strategies, leading to continuous growth in their TEYL competence (Cadiz, 2022). By mastering these three aspects of classroom management, prospective teachers can facilitate optimal learning for young learners.

Teaching English for Young Learners (TEYL) has become a key focus in global education due to the increasing importance of early language acquisition. In the TEYL Subject, students learn how to teach English to young learners. They should know how to manage class, how to understand the students, and even how to prepare the materials. According to Fatimah and Soviyah (2024), core TEYL competencies include lesson planning, child-friendly teaching strategies, classroom management, the use of teaching media, and self-reflection. These indicators guide the development of effective teaching practices suitable for young learners.

Since classroom management plays a significant role in developing TEYL competence during internship programs, it becomes essential to understand how pre-service teachers apply these strategies in real teaching contexts. Given these considerations, this study aims to examine pre-service teachers' classroom management strategies: an experience in a teaching internship program. Specifically, it will focus on physical environment, psycho-social management, and

classroom activity management. The findings are expected to provide valuable insights for improving teacher education curricula and supporting the professional development of future TEYL educators.

METHOD

This study employed a quantitative descriptive survey design to explore pre-service teachers' classroom management strategies; an experience on teaching internship program. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), a quantitative descriptive survey design is appropriate for systematically collecting numerical data to describe characteristics and perceptions of a specific population at a certain point in time. This design allowed the researchers to capture a detailed snapshot of pre-service teachers' attitudes and experiences regarding their internship program, enabling meaningful statistical analysis and generalization.

Respondents

The participants of this study were 13 students from the English Education Study Program who were in their seventh semester of the academic year 2022/2023 and had previously completed a teaching internship focused on TEYL (Teaching English for Young Learners). These pre-service teachers had gained firsthand experience through their internship, which made them suitable informants for exploring perceptions of the internship program's role in developing TEYL competence. The data collection process was carried out over a period of two weeks.

Instruments

The researchers' instrument was a closed-ended questionnaire using a 4-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. This questionnaire was adapted based on Soraya et al., (2022) emphasizing the importance of classroom management, which includes arranging the physical environment, psycho-social management, and classroom activity management. The content validity of the instrument was validated by two experts: a TEYL lecturer and an additional validator, ensuring that the questionnaire items accurately represented the relevant aspects. Meanwhile, reliability was tested using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient through SPSS software to determine the internal consistency of the questionnaire items

Procedure

The researchers' procedure involved three stages: (1) validating the instrument; (2) distributing the questionnaire to pre-service teachers who had completed their teaching internship; and (3) collecting and analyzing data using statistical measurements.

Data analysis

The data obtained from the questionnaire were analyzed quantitatively using descriptive statistics to describe prospective teachers' perceptions of teaching internship programs in TEYL competency development. The analysis began with the data organization stage, which involves coding the questionnaire data into numerical scores according to a 4-point Likert scale (1 is Strongly Disagree to 4 is Strongly Agree). Next, the validity and reliability of the instrument were checked to ensure internal consistency using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient through SPSS (Creswell and Creswell, 2018).

The following was step is calculating descriptive statistics in the form of frequency percentages for each statement item to determine the level of respondent agreement. This percentage is calculated using the formula:

$$\text{Percentage} = \left(\frac{\text{Number of Respondents Choosing a Certain Category}}{\text{Total Number of Respondents}} \right) \times 100\%$$

Using the percentage results, researchers identified the majority responses of the respondents regarding the aspects of TEYL competencies during the internship. This analytical process ended with data interpretation and presentation of the results in the form of tables and graphs, as well as discussion of findings related to relevant theories and literature (Zulkifli et al., 2019). This descriptive approach was very effective in providing a comprehensive picture of the population's perceptions and served as a basis for further recommendations in developing TEYL teaching programs.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the results of the study and discusses the findings based on the data obtained from the questionnaire. The results describe pre-service teachers' perceptions of classroom management strategies during the teaching internship program, while the discussion interprets these findings by relating them to relevant theories and previous studies in the context of Teaching English to Young Learners (TEYL).

This part reports the descriptive results of the questionnaire analysis, which focused on pre-service teachers' perceptions of classroom management strategies during their teaching internship. The results are organized into three main aspects adapted from Soraya et al. (2022): physical environment management, psycho-social management, and classroom activity management. The teaching internship program provides pre-service teachers with direct experience in managing real classroom situations, particularly in teaching English to young learners. The questionnaire was valid.

Table 1. Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.967	10

The result of the reliability test showed a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.96, indicating very high internal consistency of the instrument. The collected data were then analyzed descriptively using frequency and percentage to identify dominant perceptions related to classroom management practices during the teaching internship.

Physical Environment Management

Table.2 Pre-Service Teachers' Perception of Physical Environment Management

Items	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1. There is a setting arrangement that facilitates interaction between teacher and students	1	7.7	0	0	8	61.5	4	30.8
2. Lighting, sound, and classroom comfort are adequate for the learning process	0	0	1	7.7	4	30.8	8	61.5
3. Learning equipment, such as whiteboards, computers, and a classroom clock, is available in the classroom	1	7.7	1	7.7	7	53.8	4	30.8

Table 2 shows that the majority of pre-service teachers had positive perceptions of physical environment management during their teaching internship. Most respondents agreed that seating arrangements supported interaction between teachers and students (61.5%). Regarding classroom conditions, a large proportion of respondents strongly agreed (61.5%) that lighting, sound, and classroom comfort were adequate for the learning process. Additionally, more than half of the respondents (53.8%) agreed that learning equipment such as whiteboards, computers, and

classroom clocks were available, indicating that the physical environment generally supported effective teaching and learning activities. The physical environment management aspect obtained an average score of 58.93%, which indicates a good level of competence in utilizing classroom facilities to support the learning process.

These findings indicate that pre-service teachers perceived the physical classroom environment as generally supportive of instructional activities during their internship. The positive responses suggest that adequate seating arrangements, classroom conditions, and learning facilities contributed to facilitating interaction and enhancing the overall effectiveness of teaching and learning processes in the TEYL context. This perception aligns with research by Setyaningrum et al. (2022), where pre-service TEYL teachers reported positive experiences during practicum, including adaptations to classroom setups that supported innovative and interactive English teaching for young learners.

Psycho Social Management

Table 3. Pre-Service Teachers' Perceptions of Psycho-Social Management

Items	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1. Establish clear classroom rules to maintain order during the learning process	1	7.7	0	0	8	61.5	4	30.8
2. Provide verbal and written feedback on students' assignments	1	7.7	2	15.4	4	30.8	6	46.2
3. Give a reward to students to motivate and increase their learning participant	1	7.7	0	0	6	46.2	6	46.2

As presented in Table 3, psycho-social management was perceived positively by most pre-service teachers. The majority of respondents agreed (61.5%) that they established clear classroom rules to maintain order. In terms of feedback, nearly half of the respondents (46.2%) strongly agreed that they provided verbal and written feedback on students' assignments. Moreover, giving rewards as a motivational strategy was also viewed positively, with equal proportions of respondents agree and strongly agree (46.2%). These findings suggest that pre-service teachers were able to manage classroom interactions and students' motivation effectively during their internship. The average score for psycho-social management items was 51.3%, confirming the positive perception through descriptive analysis. These findings suggest that pre-service teachers were able to manage classroom interactions and students' motivation effectively during their internship. This aligns with Soraya et al. (2022), who emphasize psycho-social strategies like rules, feedback, and rewards as key to supportive TEYL environments.

Classroom Activity Management

Table 4. Pre-Service Teachers' Perceptions of Classroom Activity Management

Items	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1. Manage learning time by dividing activities into opening, core, and closing	0	0	1	7.7	4	30.8	8	61.5
2. Use various student work models, such as individual, paired, and group work, during learning activities	0	0	1	7.7	3	23.1	9	69.2
3. Walk around the classroom to check students' work and monitor their understanding during the learning process	1	7.7	0	0	2	15.4	10	76.9
4. Organize learning activities effectively and efficiently	1	7.7	0	0	5	38.5	7	53.8

Table 4 indicates that classroom activity management received the strongest positive responses among the three aspects. Most respondents strongly agreed that they managed learning time effectively by dividing activities into opening, core, and closing stages (61.5%). A high percentage of respondents (69.2%) strongly agreed that they applied various work models, including individual, paired, and group work. Additionally, monitoring students' work by walking around the classroom received the highest strong agreement (76.9%), highlighting active supervision during learning activities. Furthermore, a total of 53.8% of respondents strongly agree that they were able to organize learning activities effectively and efficiently. The average score for classroom activity management items was 69.2%. These findings align with Setiyarini (2023), who documented pre-service teachers' success in implementing active monitoring and varied grouping strategies during TEYL practicum to enhance learning flow.

Based on the overall findings, pre-service teachers demonstrated positive perceptions of classroom management strategies implemented during the teaching internship program. When the three aspects were compared, classroom activity management showed the strongest results, followed by psycho-social management and physical environment management. This indicates that pre-service teachers were generally more confident in managing learning activities and classroom interactions than in controlling physical classroom conditions.

This study explored pre-service teachers' perceptions of classroom management strategies during the teaching internship program, focusing on physical environment management, psycho-social management, and classroom activity management. Overall, the findings indicate that the teaching internship program plays a crucial role in strengthening pre-service teachers' classroom management competence in the TEYL context. The consistently high percentages of agreement across the three aspects suggest that real classroom experience enables pre-service teachers to apply theoretical knowledge into authentic teaching practices. This finding supports Cai et al. (2022), who argue that teaching internships significantly contribute to the development of teaching efficacy and professional confidence through direct classroom engagement.

In addition to confirming previous findings, this study also highlights the contextual contribution of internship experiences in shaping the practical classroom management competencies of prospective teachers in the context of teaching English for young learners (TEYL). Exposure to these experiences allows them to internalize classroom management

strategies not only as conceptual knowledge, but also as applied professional skills. The high percentage of agreement in all three aspects indicates that experiential learning during internships strengthens their readiness to manage real classrooms, especially in teaching young learners.

Overall, the findings of this study reinforce previous research suggesting that teaching internships serve as an effective platform for developing classroom management competence. By engaging directly with young learners, pre-service teachers gain opportunities to practice organizing activities, managing interactions, and adapting to classroom realities. These experiences contribute significantly to their professional readiness and align with the core TEYL competencies outlined by Fatimah and Soviyah (2024), particularly in classroom management and instructional delivery.

CONCLUSION

By doing this study, it can be concluded that the teaching internship program plays an important role in developing pre-service teachers' classroom management strategies in the TEYL context. The findings show that most pre-service teachers demonstrated positive perceptions across the three aspects of classroom management, namely physical environment management, psycho-social management, and classroom activity management. Among these aspects, classroom activity management obtained the strongest results, indicating that pre-service teachers were more confident in managing learning time, organizing classroom activities, applying various work models, and actively supervising students during the learning process.

In addition, positive perceptions were also found in psycho-social management and physical environment management, reflecting pre-service teachers' ability to establish classroom rules, motivate students, and utilize classroom conditions to support learning. Although minor limitations were identified, particularly related to classroom facilities, the overall results indicate that the teaching internship program effectively supports the development of pre-service teachers' classroom management competence. Therefore, the teaching internship program can be considered an essential component in preparing pre-service teachers to teach English to young learners effectively.

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