

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. The Background of the Study

Classroom management includes various aspects aimed at creating an optimal and directed learning environment. One of the important aspects of classroom management is the physical environment, which involves the arrangement of space, facilities, and other physical elements that can support the learning process. The seating arrangement is an important element of this physical environment. A proper seating arrangement can enhance students' comfort and concentration, as well as facilitate interaction between students and teachers, and among students themselves. When students are seated in a way that encourages communication and collaboration, they are more likely to engage actively in the lesson. On the other hand, an improper seating arrangement can affect communication and reduce the effectiveness of learning, as students may feel restricted in participating or collaborating fully in the learning process.

Classroom seating arrangements are often regarded as a simple, practical aspect of classroom management. However, in reality, the way seats are organized significantly contributes to the learning environment. In English language learning, especially in vocational education that combine theory and practice, seating arrangements can affect the learning. It affects not only students' concentration but also shapes interaction patterns between students and between students and teachers, which in turn can affect learning engagement and motivation.

Based on the researcher's observation, students in the class of the TKKR of the Beauty and Hairdressing Department at SMKN 8 Medan tended to be passive during English lessons, with minimal engagement in discussions and collaborative activities. The seating arrangement in the classroom remained monotonous, as the desks were rarely arranged to suit the needs of the learning activities. Furthermore, the classroom facilities, particularly the desks, were not suitable for active English learning. The desks, designed specifically for beauty practice, were less flexible and unsuitable for group discussions or other interactive learning activities. This fixed seating arrangement limited students' ability to communicate effectively with both their classmates and the teacher, resulting in reduced engagement in the learning process.

According to Scrivener (2012), different seating arrangements designed for classroom activities, such as semi-circle, U-shape, or full circle, can increase student engagement by creating a more dynamic and interactive learning environment. Appropriate seating arrangements can motivate students and prevent boredom resulting from a monotonous classroom atmosphere. In the context of English language learning, where language acquisition relies heavily on interaction and speaking practice, seating arrangements that support such activities are necessary.

Furthermore, Oruikor, Ewane, Durotoye, and Akomaye (2023) mentioned that effective seating arrangements can increase student engagement by encouraging collaboration and communication in the classroom. This shows that a well-designed classroom arrangement can help create a learning environment

that supports student interaction with the teacher and among fellow students. In addition, according to Evans and Lovell (in Hue and Li, 2008) creative use of physical space has a significant influence on student learning. With a good seating arrangement, students can be more actively involved in English learning because they are given the opportunity to interact more intensively with the teacher and classmates.

An important consideration in optimizing seating arrangements is the teacher's perception of their effectiveness. Goldstein and Brockmole (2017) state that perception is an experience formed from what is perceived through the five senses. In the classroom, how teachers perceive seating arrangements depends on how well they help students engage and interact. If teachers feel the seating arrangement is effective, they will be more confident in using it to support learning. However, if teachers feel the arrangement is not good enough, it may make them hesitate to use it. This perception also influences how often they modify or adjust seating arrangements to improve the classroom environment. Furthermore, a teacher's positive perception can lead to a more adaptive approach in arranging seating to meet diverse student needs and enhance overall classroom dynamics.

Irwanto (2002) classifies perception into two types, namely positive and negative. Positive perceptions refer to views or judgments that support the success of a concept or practice, while negative perceptions reflect views that are less supportive or even hinder its implementation. In an educational context, teachers' perceptions of seating arrangements can play an important role in determining

the effectiveness of classroom learning. Positive perceptions allow teachers to be more flexible in adopting various seating arrangement patterns that can enhance student interaction and engagement. Conversely, negative perceptions can become barriers that affect the optimal implementation of seating arrangements.

In vocational classes such as the Beauty and Hairdressing Department, the need for seating arrangements that support the transition between theoretical and practical learning is crucial. Theory activities often require focused seating patterns, such as rows or U-shapes, to maximize students' understanding of the material. Practical learning, on the other hand, requires more flexible seating arrangements, such as zones or one large table, to provide space for students to work collaboratively. In this situation, teachers' perceptions of the use of each seating arrangement play an important role in creating a learning environment that supports both types of activities equally. These perceptions not only influence how teachers design learning activities but also how students respond and interact during the learning process.

However, the implementation of different seating arrangements is not free from challenges. Brown (2000) identifies several challenges that are often faced in implementing seating arrangements, such as classroom space limitations, student comfort, and student attention and engagement. Space limitations reduce the flexibility of seating arrangements, making dynamic arrangements that require large spaces difficult. In addition, student comfort is also an important factor that affects their concentration and engagement. If students are uncomfortable with a new seating position, they will find it difficult to stay focused. On the other hand,

too frequent seating changes can distract students' attention and engagement, especially if they are not used to the dynamics of such changes. All these factors can reduce the effectiveness of seating arrangements in creating an ideal learning atmosphere.

The urgency of this study arises from the need to further analyze teachers' perceptions of seating arrangements, especially in the context of vocational education. Teachers' perceptions are crucial as it can influence their decisions in choosing and organizing the most effective seating arrangements to support student engagement and interaction, especially in an environment that combines theory and practice such as in the Beauty and Hairdressing Department at SMKN 8 Medan. Therefore, this study will focus on how teachers perceive seating arrangements and the challenges they face in implementing them in English classes.

Some previous studies have also highlighted the importance of seating arrangements in learning. Numerous studies have explored the impact of seating arrangements on learning, but there is limited research specifically focusing on teachers' perceptions of seating arrangements in vocational education settings. Adolo, Akhmad, and Jannatussholihah (2022) revealed that teachers' perceptions of seating arrangements greatly influence student engagement and interaction in the classroom. Their research shows that although teachers perceive seating arrangements as an important element of classroom management, they face challenges in the form of cramped classrooms as well as student distractions during transitions between seating arrangements. This research emphasizes the need for

effective strategies to overcome these obstacles in order to create a conducive classroom environment.

In addition, Rogers (2020) investigated the impact of different seating arrangements on student participation and assessment performance in a fourth-grade classroom. The findings revealed that the horseshoe layout was the most effective in fostering student engagement and improving learning outcomes. Students were more active in whole-class lessons and showed the greatest improvement in assessments. The study concluded that different seating arrangements, especially the horseshoe arrangement, provided the best classroom environment for student engagement and academic progress.

Based on the preliminary observation, relevant theories, and previous research, this study aims to analyze teachers' perceptions of seating arrangement in English language learning in class XI TKKR 1. This study will also identify the challenges faced by the teacher in using different seating arrangements in the classroom. Based on the previous analysis and discussion, the researcher feels interested to analyze the following research title: "Teachers' Perceptions of Seating Arrangement in Grade XI of The Beauty and Hairdressing Department at SMKN 8 Medan".

B. The Problems of the Study

In accordance with the background of the study, the researcher presents the following problems of the study:

1. How are the teachers' perceptions of the seating arrangement in Grade XI of the Beauty and Hairdressing Department at SMKN 8 Medan?

2. What are the challenges faced by the teachers in using different seating arrangements in English learning for Grade XI of the Beauty and Hairdressing Department at SMKN 8 Medan?

C. The Objectives of the Study

This study aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. To analyze the teachers' perceptions of seating arrangement in Grade XI of the Beauty and Hairdressing Department at SMKN 8 Medan.
2. To analyze the challenges faced by the teachers in using different seating arrangements in English learning for Grade XI of the Beauty and Hairdressing Department at SMKN 8 Medan.

D. The Scope of the Study

The scope of this research is limited to the perceptions of two English teachers who teach in grade XI of the Beauty and Hairdressing Department (TKKR) at SMKN 8 Medan. The research will focus on their perceptions of different seating arrangements as well as the challenges faced in using these arrangements during the English learning process.

E. The Significances of the Study

This research is expected to contribute both theoretically and practically as follows:

1. Theoretically

This research offers insights into teachers' perceptions of the seating arrangements and the challenges faced by teachers in using different seating arrangements in English language learning. It will enrich the existing literature

on classroom management by emphasizing the significance of physical arrangements in vocational education settings, particularly in enhancing student engagement and motivation.

2. Practically

For students, understanding how seating arrangements influence their motivation and engagement can help them recognize their role in fostering a conducive learning environment. This awareness is expected to encourage them to adjust their behavior and participate more actively in class discussions and activities.

For teachers, the findings will provide a deeper understanding of how different seating arrangements can affect student and engagement. This knowledge will enable teachers to refine their classroom management strategies, facilitating more effective English language instruction and improving overall student participation.

For schools, this research will assist school administrators in identifying the challenges teachers face regarding seating arrangements. The schools can implement targeted support and professional development to enhance teachers' classroom management and create a better learning environment.

For future researchers, this study will serve as a valuable reference for those interested in exploring classroom dynamics, particularly in vocational education contexts. The insights gained from this research will contribute to a broader understanding of effective teaching strategies that can be applied in similar educational settings.