

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In this chapter, the researcher divided the discussion into three subsections, including theoretical description, theoretical framework, and review of previous studies.

#### 2.1 Theoretical Description

In this theoretical description, we discuss the definition and explanation of classroom management, seating arrangements, class sizes, and student experience variables.

##### 2.1.1 Classroom Management

All teachers want their classes to be distraction-free. That way, teachers do a variety of things to prevent and address distractions and behavioral problems in the classroom. The teacher's expertise in regulating, limiting, and applying rules to students to create a positive environment with the aim of realizing effective educational outcomes is classroom management. Classroom management is needed if the teacher wants certain goals to be achieved. On the other hand, not only with regard to student behavior problems, classroom management also organizes activities and lesson plans that concern time, materials, and spaces.<sup>1</sup> Wong and Rosemary state that classroom management is the teacher's effort to master the classroom in such a way that students, space, time, and subject matter are organized in ways that facilitate the process of teaching and learning.<sup>2</sup> If teachers are able to structure their lessons properly, the consequences will affect their lessons, leading to distraction, confusion, and negative behavior. An unconditional environment does not allow for effective classroom management. Therefore, teacher skill or teacher strategy is required to achieve this.

Class management is a task of teachers and schools to achieve specific goals in shaping appropriate student behavior. These goals can be morale-enhancing, academic progress, or other goals. These goals can be achieved by

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<sup>1</sup> Mohammad Aliakbari and Bafrin Bozorgmanesh, "Assertive Classroom Management Strategies and Students' Performance: The Case of EFL Classroom," *Cogent Education* 2, no. 1 (2015), <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2015.1012899>.

<sup>2</sup> Harry K. Wong and Rosemary Tripi Wong, "The First Days of School: How to Be an Effective Teacher," 2005, 338.

applying Brophy's three core principles. This means understanding student expectations for attitudes and teaching, initiating active learning and student engagement, and identifying key student behaviors for success.<sup>3</sup> Setting behavioral expectations for students is poorly pursued by the students themselves. The three things above require the support of various circles to create perseverance and student initiative. Communicating expectations to students in a simple and heartfelt way by providing educational experiences. This is the way through fun lessons, breaks, humor, and warnings about important aspects to strive for in lessons.<sup>4</sup> It can be said that student behavior and the fulfillment of expectations start with the efforts of teachers and schools to set the right example for students until they become good habits for the students themselves.

Classroom management is regarded critical as it is the first step toward effective teaching and learning. If the class is properly managed, the goal of the teaching and learning process is achieved. Many studies have been conducted to create the right classroom management in order to get student engagement in the classroom and how students can enthusiastically follow the lesson. Elizabeth explained that student engagement is a top priority for curriculum formation. She also revealed that student engagement can include what aspects can affect student engagement in classwork and how to improve it.<sup>5</sup> It can help educators understand students' needs by improving student engagement.

Student engagement in the classroom is influenced by several factors. There are several types of strategies teachers use to address student behavior in the classroom. Specifically, seating arrangements and class sizes. Classroom environments in Hagigi and Jussan are failing to be implemented without

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<sup>3</sup> J Brophy, "History of Research on Classroom Management. in C. M. Evertson and C. S. Weinstein (Eds), *Handbook of Classroom Management: Research, Practice, and Contemporary Issues*," Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers, 2006, 17–43.

<sup>4</sup> Katharina Sieberer-Nagler, "Effective Classroom-Management and Positive Teaching," *English Language Teaching* 9, no. 1 (2015): 163, <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v9n1p163>.

<sup>5</sup> Guardino and Fullerton, "Changing Behaviors by Changing the Classroom Environment."

proper seating arrangements.<sup>6</sup> Creating a good environment through physical layout helps achieve academic goals. Additionally, class size has a significant impact on class management. Moluayonge and Inwoo class sizes also affect teacher performance and student interaction<sup>7</sup>. A survey conducted by the APA shows that the chaos of the learning environment is caused by a lack of classroom management strategies and is a problem that can contribute to stress to teachers.<sup>8</sup> Thus, the class size determines how the seating arrangement is formed. If that happens, it will determine whether teaching and learning can take place properly.

### 2.1.2 Seating Arrangement

Classroom setup is one of the many ways educators can use to get maximize of the classes. Seat control allows students to interact more actively within the classroom among fellow students, or between students and teachers. In Indonesia, it has popular to compete for the first seat so that children can focus more on learning. Naturally, the proper seat provides students with precise mobility, so that students are interested in the educator's explanation, pay attention, have precise motivations, and no interference.<sup>9</sup> It benefits students who are seated in the front or center to support student engagement in the classroom. As a result,

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<sup>6</sup> Mohammad Moslemi Haghighi and Mahmud Mohd Jusun, "Exploring Students Behavior on Seating Arrangements in Learning Environment: A Review," *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 36, no. June 2011 (2012): 287–94, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2012.03.032>.

<sup>7</sup> Gracemary Eloheke Moluayonge and Innwoo Park, "Effect of Challenges with Class Size, Classroom Management and Availability of Instructional Resources on Science Teachers' Teaching Practices in Secondary Schools," *Journal of Science Education* 41, no. 1 (2017): 135–51, <https://doi.org/10.21796/jse.2017.41.1.135>.

<sup>8</sup> Samantha Kratochwill, Thomas R., DeRoos, Rachel., Blair, "Classroom Management Module; Applications of Psychological Science to Teaching and Learning Modules," American Psychological Association, 2015, <https://www.apa.org/education-career/k12/modules-classroom-management#:~:text=Why is classroom management important, facilitates social and emotional growth.>

<sup>9</sup> Raodahtul Jannah and Sitti Nurfaidah, "Classroom Seating Arrangement: EFL Students' Choice in Speaking Class," *Al-Lughawiyat* 2, no. 1 (2021): 41–48, <https://ejournal.iainkendari.ac.id/index.php/allughawiyat/article/download/2919/1780>.

students' academic performance improves, which is why classroom organization is critical.

Seating arrangement is part of a teacher's plan for organizing a lesson. It involves instructing students to be in the classroom in the form of the arrangement of tables, chairs, and presentation equipment. These seats work with the intention of influencing the participation of students at specific points in their learning is needed. Appropriate seating arrangements should provide opportunities for interaction, a fair command of the subject matter, and easy access to it.<sup>10</sup> The seating plan becomes a complicated task when making complex choices. Because seats should be assigned based on background and ability, upper-class students should assist lower-class students. Recent research has proven that there are positive results in the selection of seating arrangements that can work properly. Wannarka and Ruhl show the benefit, i.e., students stay focused on their tasks, attract better student engagement results from positive academics, and have a great impact on the social skills of the students because it provides students interact closely with other student or teachers.<sup>11</sup> Therefore, teacher needs to consider arranging a sitting position.

Basically, a good form of seating arrangement will help the teacher manage time very well. The teacher forms a seating arrangement by considering the goals to be achieved. If teachers usually use a form of seating arrangement where the teacher's stage is ahead, teachers should consider more other options in determining the seating arrangement. It will give the effect of students' sense of security from teacher supervision so that they can work effectively either individually or in groups. To do so, Dunbar in Maykasari and Purbani gives some advice that teachers can follow in shaping seating arrangements. First, the student's sitting position is formed so that students can easily reach the teacher and attract their attention. Second, there is an empty place for other purposes during learning, such as English role play, speech, or

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<sup>10</sup> Ikram Çınar, Classroom geography: Who Sit where in the traditional classroom?, *Journal of International Social Research*, 3, (2010): 201

<sup>11</sup> Rachel. Wannarka and Kathy Ruhl, "Seating Arrangements That Promote Positive Academic and Behavioural Outcomes: A Review of Empirical Research," *Support for Learning* 23 (2008): 89–93, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9604.2008.00375.x>.

debate. Third, students have a good perspective to look at the teacher and the blackboard<sup>12</sup>. Fourth, keep areas with high mobility free of distractions. Then, make sure teaching materials are easy to read and accessible for students<sup>13</sup>. The layout of the classroom, from the seats to the teaching needs, should be properly prepared to support learning activities.

### 2.1.3 Class Size

The number of students in a class assigned to a teacher is referred to as the class size. Ali defined class size refers to the teacher-student ratio per class,<sup>14</sup> and Ikoro also refers not only to the group of people occupying the space, but also to where the interaction takes place.<sup>15</sup> According to Adeyemi, class size also means the average number of students per class in a school.<sup>16</sup> Some countries have class size standards, such as Canada, Australia, Romania, the Czech Republic, the United States, and Slovenia, with less than 30 students in a standard class, the Netherlands and Norway with no more than 20 students, and Japan and Singapore with around 30 students. The standard issued by UNESCO is 25 students per class.<sup>17</sup> Therefore, there is a classification of class sizes into large classes and small classes.

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<sup>12</sup> Widyastuti. Maykasari, Dyta., Purbani, "EXPLORING CLASSROOM SEATING ARRANGEMENT AND ITS EFFECT ON CHILDREN BEHAVIOR IN EFL CLASS: A REVIEW," in Proceeding of International Conference On Child-Friendly Education, (Surakarta, 2018), 472–77.

<sup>13</sup> VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY, "How Do Teachers Prepare Their Students and Their Classrooms for Differentiated Instruction?," IRIS CENTER, 2022, <https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/module/di/cresource/q3/p10/>.

<sup>14</sup> Aliu E, "Class Size and Learning Environment," Ibadan: College Press., 2015.

<sup>15</sup> Ikolo, "Effect of Classroom Size on Students' Academic Performance of Secondary School Students in Kosofe Local Government Area of Lagos State" (Lagos State University Ojo., 2011).

<sup>16</sup> Adeyemi TO, "Influence of Class-Size on the Quality of Output in Secondary Schools in Ekiti State, Nigeria," *American-Eurasian J. of Scientific Res* 3, no. 1 (2012): 7–14, <https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.4314/ijepse.v7i1.38206>.

<sup>17</sup> Oluwatosin Victor Ajayi, Evelyn Ehi Ajayi, and Christins Tanko Audu, "Influence of Class Size on Students' Classroom Discipline, Engagement and Communication: A Case Study of Senior Secondary Schools in Ekiti State, Nigeria Ethnoscience with Bias in Ethnochemistry View Project," *Sky Journal of Educational Research* 5, no. 5 (2017): 34–41, <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/321212374>.

Class sizes are divided into small classes and large classes. According to Bray and Kehle, a class can be categorized as simple when it has fewer than 20 students. They say that EFL teachers prefer to teach in classes of about 15 students.<sup>18</sup> Meanwhile, large classes (overcrowding) contain more than 25 students; when the number of students fills the classroom, teachers are overwhelmed in teaching.<sup>19</sup> Overcrowding can result in a lack of opportunity for all students to engage with teachers. In Indonesia, there are still many classes with a number of greater than 25. Some even reach 40 students per class. The rules for the maximum number of students in Indonesia are: elementary school (28), junior high school (32), senior high school (36).<sup>20</sup> The amount has been reduced from before. The amount is quite large to apply if there are many quiet students in the class. However, 28 to 36 students in a class may not be the ideal class size for ELT. So, basically, every country has regulations on applying the size of classes in classroom.

Class size also affects the effectiveness of managed classes. The number of students per class determines the interaction and work management of the students in the class. Ajayi, Audu, and Ehi said classrooms are well prepared by teachers means the students influence their behavior, attention and engagement, and tend to follow rules in the classroom.<sup>21</sup> A lot of research suggests that class sizes should be reduced (small class) because of the positive benefits. Negative student behavior is reduced in small classes. Smaller classes also benefit the individual student and allow the student to receive more attention from the teacher. According to Blatchford et al., small class sizes are easier to adjust due to smaller student numbers, classroom conditions are easier for teachers to

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<sup>18</sup> Emmer and Sabornie, *Handb. Classr. Manag.*

<sup>19</sup> Küçükler, Halil and Kodal, Abdullah, *Foreign Language Teaching in OverCrowded Classes. English Language Teaching*, 12, 169, (2018)

<sup>20</sup> Kemdikbud, "Perhatikan Keberagaman Daerah, Mendikbud Terbitkan Surat Edaran Tentang PPDB," Web Kemendikbud, 2017, <https://www.kemdikbud.go.id/main/blog/2017/07/perhatikan-keberagaman-daerah-mendikbud-terbitkan-surat-edaran-tentang-ppdb>.

<sup>21</sup> Ajayi, Ajayi, and Audu, "Influence of Class Size on Students' Classroom Discipline, Engagement and Communication: A Case Study of Senior Secondary Schools in Ekiti State, Nigeria Ethnoscience with Bias in Ethnochemistry View Project."

handle, and they create better interaction between students and teachers. Students also want to be actively involved in the teaching and learning process.<sup>22</sup> It can be summarized that a small class size can better understand student behavior.

Meanwhile, in large classes, students do not get the same opportunity in terms of teacher attention. Wang and Calvano also delivered, "...large classes, students may perceive a lower level of teacher interactions and satisfaction".<sup>23</sup> A problem students face in large classes is the fear and shame of being more active during class. Such students either become passive in the classroom or become slow to react, and teachers need to make more effort to drag them out. Teachers should also pay attention when there are passive students who are closed off by active students. Laria and Hubbal explain that in large classes, students do not communicate casually and do not interact spontaneously. Small classes, in contrast give the impression that students are free to voice their opinions and support learning in the best possible way by facilitating spontaneous interaction.<sup>24</sup> However, large classes are also useful in helping faculty provide space for events such as seminars, workshops, and additional classes. On the other hand, it is indeed less than optimal for the academic needs of students.

#### **2.1.4 Students' Experience**

Students are as important as teachers to the classroom's success. Through the existing education system, teachers and ministers of education determine students' learning needs, how they learn, when they learn, and how long they learn. If the goal is to hold students accountable and act on their own initiative, they need to be given the confidence to make choices. Give students the opportunity to have a voice and a choice in the classroom or at school. When teachers and

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<sup>22</sup> Russell. P, Blatchford., A and Brown P, "Teaching in Large and Small Classes," in *International Handbook of Research on Teachers and Teaching*, ed. A.G Saha, L.J and Dworkin (New York City: NY Routledge, 2009), 779–90, [https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/978-0-387-73317-3\\_49](https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/978-0-387-73317-3_49).

<sup>23</sup> Liz Wang and Lisa Calvano, "Class Size, Student Behaviors and Educational Outcomes," *Organization Management Journal* 19, no. 4 (2022): 126–42, <https://doi.org/10.1108/OMJ-01-2021-1139>.

<sup>24</sup> Giuseppe Iaria and Harry Hubball, "Assessing Student Engagement in Small and Large Classes," *Transformative Dialogues: Teaching and Learning Journal* 2, no. 1 (2008): 1–8.

administrators make direct policies without listening to students, students become passive and apathetic. Professional teachers and school leaders need to understand the needs of their students in class, i.e., instructional techniques, seating arrangements, class rules, and student numbers per class, to reduce disruptive student behavior. That's why we need student voices.

Students of all ages want to be heard. Teachers sometimes impose their mind on students regardless of what they want. However, teachers also expect their students to be active and manageable. Rozimela, in her studies, formed a five-seat group in the classroom. There are students with negative personalities in the class. She asked the students how they could assist with the lesson, and they simply requested that they change their sitting position. In other seating groups, students move and walk during class, but the reason they are equal is to form a seating position for the group they disliked.<sup>25</sup> According to Widya, Mansur, and Sidik, the application of the traditional seating arrangement in the classroom turned out to be preferred by students. Students sit quietly, are actively engaged, and are enthusiastic. However, the use of traditional seating arrangements has no impact on student concentration.<sup>26</sup> In another study by Ni'matus Sholihah, et al., found that students were more comfortable in a U-shaped seating arrangement, though they were still nervous and couldn't hide their facial expressions.<sup>27</sup> In a small class, small classes are their interest. According to Jeremy et al., the conducive state of the class allows them to focus more on their tasks. They also added that it will take a little time to

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<sup>25</sup> Yenni Rozimela, "Untold Story: Classroom Management Problems and Their Influence on Student-Teachers' Teaching," Proceedings of ISELT, 2016, 489–96, <http://ejournal.unp.ac.id/index.php/selt/article/viewFile/7013/5547>.

<sup>26</sup> N. I. Sidik Septiorini, W. D. Srisudarso, M., "EFL Teachers' Beliefs of Classroom Seating Arrangements," INTERACTION: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa 9, no. 1 (2022): 101–8, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.36232/jurnalpendidikanbahasa.v9i1.1699>.

<sup>27</sup> Ni'matus Sholihah et al., "Students and Teachers Preference About Seating Arrangement for Improving Speaking: A Case Study in 10th Grade of MAN 2 Mojokerto" 434, no. Iconelt 2019 (2020): 161–65, <https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.200427.032>.



work on the task.<sup>28</sup> The success of classroom management can be seen in the mutual agreement of teachers and students.

From the explanation above, the researcher summarizes that classroom management is a teacher's strategy for organizing their classes to be free from distractions. Classroom management also shapes the teacher's expectations of students about how the class is going. The notion of whether a crowded class teacher is an actively engaged student or whether a crowded class is a disruptive class depend on the expectations of the teacher itself. In meeting these expectations, opinions from students are needed. So teachers need management skills to create effective classes. If the teacher wants an effective classroom, the teacher should prepare the steps in an organized manner. Thus, an effective management class can be created.

Classroom management can be determined by class size and seating arrangements. The teacher creates a seating arrangement to better position students' views in the classroom. A proper seating arrangement affects students' attention to the teacher's explanation and the student's negative or positive behavior. Seating arrangements also give students the opportunity to interact and easy access to lessons. To achieve this, teachers must know the needs of students regarding the seating arrangement that is suitable for them. In addition, class size greatly affects student engagement during the English language learning process. Class size determines the number of students in the class. According to many studies, the average student will be actively involved in a small class, but in large class the student becomes passive. This is because students feel unconfident if they are cared for by their peers or become the center of attention during the discussion. To cope with it, the teacher needs the opinion of his students. Teachers should involve students in decision-making (as to the seating arrangement or the number of students in the classroom). If so far teachers often ignore student voices, then from now on students are taught to actively discuss and consider the existence of students more. When the teacher has received

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<sup>28</sup> Finn, Pannozzo, and Achilles, "The 'Why's' of Class Size: Student Behavior in Small Classes."

student voices regarding seating arrangements and class sizes, good classroom management will ensue.

## 2.2 Theoretical Framework

In recent years, the government promoted Curriculum 13 (K-13), in which students were expected to learn more independently, actively, critically, and creatively. Then it switched to an independent curriculum, or Merdeka Belajar, since changing ministers. Both curricula focus on the needs of students, where in the Merdeka Belajar curriculum, students or students in college may choose what lessons they want to learn according to their interests and talents. Stakeholders hope that students have critical power and understand their efforts in achieving the future that they expect. It implies that it is time to give students the opportunity to determine, discuss, and participate in an issue.

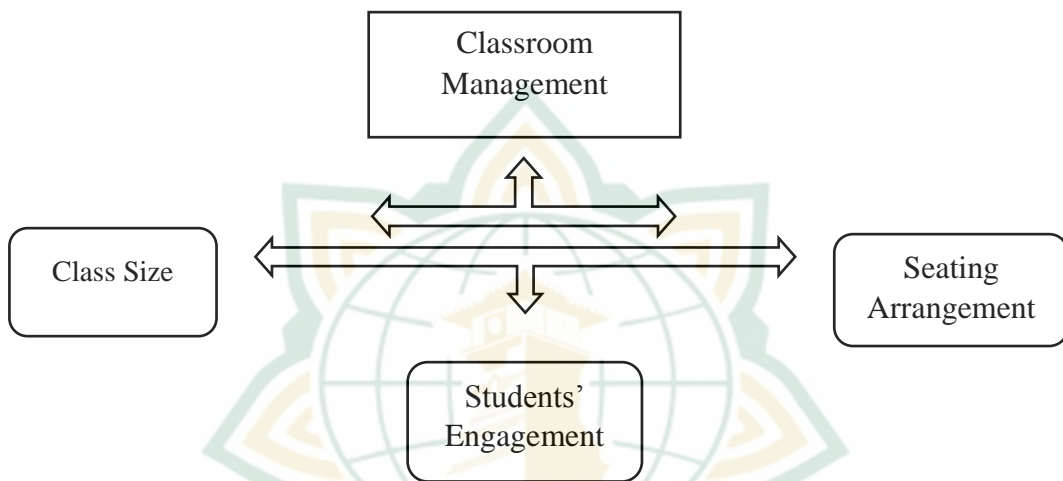
Students have the right to be heard. Student desire their existence to be validated, such as by how the teacher conducted the class, the classroom environment, and the learning materials, without feeling anxious, nervous, or insecure when engaged in the learning classroom. In a traditional way, the teacher probably became the holder of the highest authority, but now the student recognizes the right to education. If teachers and schoolmakers understand students right and voice, it can build a good relationship between teachers and students.<sup>29</sup> It also influences student performance when participating in learning. Some of the causes of student performance are class management, grouping the number of students per class, and structuring sitting positions. As explained in the previous chapter, good classroom management enhances the joyful atmosphere of learning and enhances student engagement. In some cases, students get nervous every time they want to share an idea, avoid Q&A, and even become apathetic in class.<sup>30</sup> Disruptive student behavior occurs when students are stresses by the teacher's guidance or when class organization and seating arrangements are not proper. Class size influences student exchange of ideas, seating arrangement influences student behavior and interaction with

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<sup>29</sup> Rustamjon Urinboyev, Per Wickenberg, and Ulf Leo, "Child Rights, Classroom and School Management: A Systematic Literature Review," *International Journal of Children's Rights* 24, no. 3 (2016): 522–47, <https://doi.org/10.1163/15718182-02403002>.

<sup>30</sup> Hope Teague-Bowling, "Class Size: Put Student Needs First," *Storiesfromschool.org*, 2014, <https://storiesfromschool.org/class-size-put-student-needs-first/>.

teachers, student, and others, and classroom management influences the learning environment. These three points that relate to each other ultimately affect student engagement in the classroom. There is no seating arrangement unless a class size is formed (large or small). Class size and seating arrangements that are right or wrong by the teacher will create classroom management.



*Figure 1 Correlation class size and seating arrangement create students' engagement*

### 2.3 Review of Previous Studies

Some research has been performed referring to the impact of seating arrangement and class size on EFL engagement. Several studies have been conducted relating to the effect of seating arrangements and class sizes on EFL engagement.

First, Xiaoming Yang, Xing Zhou, and Jie Hu, in their article entitled "Students' Preferences for Seating Arrangements and their Engagement in Cooperative Learning Activities in College English Blended Learning Classrooms in Higher Education," analyzed student preferences and involvement regarding seating positions in English learning. Seating influences the experience of student participation in school through communication and interaction between students and between students with teachers. The study was conducted using mixed methods (qualitative and quantitative) through questioner data collection and audio-video recording. As a result, using a semi-circular sitting position makes student engagement more controlled and aware, allowing students to move

more focusedly and be more inclusive in the classroom. A similarity with this research is that it measured student preferences for seating arrangements that were suitable for their needs in order to increase their engagement during the language learning process. However, the difference from my research is that the research uses mixed methods (qualitative and quantitative) with questioners distributed, whereas this research is conducted through narrative inquiry. Another similarity is that the researcher examined college student, whereas they were at the high school level.<sup>31</sup>

Second, by Ahmad Syaifullah, Munir Munir, and Amra Ariyani, entitled “An Analysis of Seating Arrangement on Students’ Learning Attention”. The researcher states eye contact is the first line of communication, and allowing eye contact is the same as getting students more engaged in the classroom; thus, eye contact is needed. The purpose of their study is to analyze the use of seating arrangements (row and u-shape) on students’ learning attention at SMPN 3 Polongbangkeng Utara so that teachers can definitely determine the seating arrangement that suits students’ attention. The study was conducted by conducting in-depth interviews with 25 of 8th grade students using the descriptive qualitative method and by observation through video recordings to see the differences in students’ attention from the start to the end. A similarity to this research is analyzing a seating model that is definitive so that teachers know the needs of students. They are using a descriptive qualitative method, whereas this research uses narrative inquiry. Another difference is that the the researcher’s aim is only to focus on knowing students’ attention, while this research the researcher did not only find out students’ attention or needs, but also how to increase student engagement while learning English.<sup>32</sup>

Melek Cakmak, in “The Perceptions of Student Teachers about the Effects of Class Size With Regard to Effective Teaching Process” that students feel satisfied in small classes because they have loose and flexible time. The process of assessing assignments in class is less, while a class of 30 students (large classes) becomes a formal class, takes a lot of time, and is often delayed. The study was conducted with the aim of identifying students’ and teachers’

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<sup>31</sup> Yang, Zhou, and Hu, “Students’ Preferences for Seating Arrangements and Their Engagement in Cooperative Learning Activities in College English Blended Learning Classrooms in Higher Education.”

<sup>32</sup> Syaifullah, Munir, and Ariyani, “An Analysis of Seating Arrangement toward Students’ Motivation in Learning English.”

perceptions of whether class size has an influence on the teaching process. As a result, there is a close relationship between class size and motivation, teaching methods and techniques, classroom management, and evaluation and assessment. The use of diverse and appropriate teaching methods encourages student enthusiasm and motivation, and effective classroom management is developed in small classes. Thus, assessment and evaluation by teachers will be easier to obtain. The similarity to this research is that the researcher want to find the effects that occur from the use of class size that can affect students' engagement.<sup>33</sup> The difference from my research, Melek uses open-ended questions and questionnaires in data retrieval. Meanwhile, this research involved using narrative inquiry by exploring stories from student experiences.

In "The Effects of Class Sizes on Student Achievement," Kyle Maloney presents his findings from a survey of students, teachers, and parents regarding the urgency of class size and student behavior that can affect student achievement. Surveys are distributed electronically. As a result, 72.4% of students felt that a smaller class size could increase their achievement, 76.9% of students felt they had better attention, and 82.5% of participants thought that determining class size was very important. The researcher highlighted students' opinions from the research; the student said "the smaller the class, the better the focus, less the distractions, and more time spent understanding things before moving on".<sup>34</sup> The results of data collection and students' opinions indicated that most students hoped for better achievement in smaller classes.<sup>35</sup> The similarity from my research is to show that class size can affect student engagement, which in turn affects student achievement. However, the difference is that Kyle also conducted a survey of parents and teachers. Kyle does it online in social class. I conduct in offline way. Another distinction is that Kyle's research was conducted on high school students, whereas this research was conducted on university students.

Xi Li et al., in "An Investigation of University Students' Classroom Seating Choices", state that sitting position does not

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<sup>33</sup> Melek Çakmak, "The Perceptions of Student Teachers about the Effects of Class Size with Regard to Effective Teaching Process," *Qualitative Report* 14, no. 3 (2009): 395–408, <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2009.1401>.

<sup>34</sup> Kyle Maloney, "The Effects of Class Size on Student Achievement," *Culminating Projects in Teacher Development* (St. Cloud State University, 2020), 23, [https://repository.stcloudstate.edu/ed\\_etds/48](https://repository.stcloudstate.edu/ed_etds/48).

<sup>35</sup> Maloney, 26.

significantly affect a student's academic performance. However, most students believe that the sitting position affects their learning performance. Other data show that student enthusiasm is higher in small and medium-sized classes than in large ones, and students also prefer traditional teaching styles. According to the study, traditional classrooms support the teacher's teaching model. Xi Li et al. analyzed three types of seating arrangements. There are traditional classrooms, collaboration classrooms, and computer classrooms. What this research has in common is that it analyzes student preferences for seating arrangements at the college level. The difference is that the study used traditional, collaborative, and computer classroom seating types, whereas my study used traditional, U-shaped, and modular. Another difference is that the study used a mixed method by spreading out the questioners. Meanwhile, this research was conducted through narrative research assisted by in-depth interviews.<sup>36</sup>

Based on some of the previous studies that have been conducted, the researcher is convinced that they are relevant and can be used as a reference. The thing that distinguishes the research above is the method of data collection. In this research, the focus is on stories, experiences, and perspectives from students through the narrative inquiry method. Another thing is that the researcher focus on understanding students' experience and preferences on class sizes and seating arrangements that impact on student engagement in the classroom. Furthermore, teachers are aware and more focus to arrange good environment through class sizes and seating arrangement for EFL university students, that's why students more engaged. The researcher conducted by collecting voices, opinions, stories, or experiences from students of the one of Islamic university in Kudus, which had never been done before, with a focus on student engagement in the classroom by looking at class sizes and existing seating arrangements. This research became the first to discuss classroom management (seating arrangement and class size) in one of Islamic university, specifically in Kudus.

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<sup>36</sup> Xi, Li., Yuan, Zhang., Yunqui, Bai., Chiang, "An Investigation of University Students' Classroom Seating Choices."