

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES OF A CATHOLIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION TEACHER IN SUPPORTING STUDENTS' LEARNING DISCIPLINE AT SMA NEGERI 1 SILAEN

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ABSTRAK

Observasi awal di SMA Negeri 1 Silaen menunjukkan bahwa disiplin belajar siswa belum sepenuhnya optimal, yang tampak pada keterlambatan, perhatian yang tidak konsisten, dan tanggung jawab penyelesaian tugas yang belum merata. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan strategi pengelolaan kelas guru Pendidikan Agama Katolik dalam mendukung disiplin belajar siswa serta manifestasi disiplin tersebut. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif. Informan dipilih secara purposif dan berjumlah 10 orang, terdiri atas 1 kepala sekolah, 1 guru Pendidikan Agama Katolik, dan 8 siswa. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi, wawancara mendalam, dan dokumentasi, kemudian dianalisis melalui pengodean, pengelompokan kategori, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Keabsahan data diuji melalui triangulasi sumber dan triangulasi teknik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa strategi yang paling menonjol dan paling konsisten didukung oleh seluruh sumber data ialah penetapan ekspektasi perilaku yang jelas yang dipadukan dengan komunikasi suportif serta teguran korektif yang humanis. Strategi lain meliputi pemantauan preventif, pengalihan kembali perhatian siswa pada tugas, serta pembiasaan perilaku tertib melalui penjelasan, keteladanan, dan praktik berulang. Strategi tersebut tercermin pada kepatuhan terhadap aturan, tanggung jawab menyelesaikan tugas, dan partisipasi yang tertib, meskipun keterlambatan, kurang fokus, dan tanggung jawab belajar yang belum konsisten masih ditemukan pada sebagian siswa. Temuan ini menegaskan bahwa pengelolaan kelas dalam Pendidikan Agama Katolik berfungsi sebagai proses pedagogis untuk membentuk disiplin, tanggung jawab, pengendalian diri, dan sikap saling menghargai.

Kata Kunci: Pengelolaan kelas, disiplin belajar, strategi guru

ABSTRACT

Preliminary observation at SMA Negeri 1 Silaen indicated that students' learning discipline was not yet fully optimal, as reflected in tardiness, inconsistent attention, and uneven responsibility for completing assignments. This study aims to describe the classroom management strategies used by a Catholic Religious Education teacher to support students' learning discipline and the manifestations of that discipline. The study employed a qualitative descriptive design. Ten informants were selected purposively: one principal, one Catholic Religious Education teacher, and eight students. Data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation, and were analyzed through coding, category development, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data credibility was examined through source and technique triangulation. The findings show that the most prominent strategy, consistently supported across data sources, was the establishment of clear behavioral expectations combined with supportive communication and humane corrective guidance. Other strategies included preventive monitoring, redirecting students to learning tasks, and habituating orderly behavior through repeated explanation, modeling, and practice. These strategies were reflected in rule

compliance, responsibility for completing assignments, and orderly participation, although tardiness, limited attention, and inconsistent learning responsibility remained among some students. The study confirms that classroom management in Catholic Religious Education functions as a pedagogical process for developing discipline, responsibility, self-control, and mutual respect.

Keywords: classroom management, learning discipline, teacher strategy

INTRODUCTION

Education develops academic competence and character. Learning discipline is a key character dimension because it supports responsibility, orderliness, and self-regulation during learning. Students who demonstrate learning discipline generally comply with school rules, complete assignments on time, and participate in classroom activities in an orderly manner (Aulia et al., 2025; Uripah et al., 2025). Teacher strategy is an important factor in organizing learning toward predetermined goals. A learning strategy provides a systematic pattern for selecting activities, methods, and interactions so that learning can proceed effectively, efficiently, and meaningfully (Sanjaya, 2021). In Catholic Religious Education, teaching is directed not only toward mastery of knowledge but also toward faith and character formation. The Catholic Religious Education teacher therefore acts as an educator and faith guide who helps students develop responsibility, discipline, honesty, and concern for others. This role requires learning practices that support academic engagement and value internalization, including guidance that is educational, relational, and consistent with moral formation (Ginting & Gurning, 2024).

Classroom management is a central component of that strategy. It refers to the teacher's ability to create and maintain optimal learning conditions and to restore those conditions when disruption occurs (Mulyasa, 2018). Classroom management includes physical organization, behavioral expectations, learning atmosphere, and teacher-student interaction. Effective management creates a conducive environment in which students can learn comfortably, participate actively, and develop discipline and responsibility; students' perceptions of supportive relationships and effective management are also associated with fewer classroom disruptions (Wettstein et al., 2021). Learning discipline is not limited to compliance with formal school regulations. It also includes punctuality, attention, responsibility for assignments, academic honesty, and orderly participation. Recent studies show that integrating classroom rules, responsibility, and consistent behavioral guidance can strengthen students' discipline, while inappropriate punitive practices may not support internalized self-control (Angela & Fathoni, 2022; Qonita et al., 2022).

Discipline develops through repeated guidance, habituation, and consistent reinforcement rather than through an immediate change in behavior. Teachers therefore need preventive and corrective practices that clarify expectations, provide positive reinforcement, and guide students back into learning without humiliation (Maulidya et al., 2025; Nurdian et al., 2025). In increasingly digital learning environments, clear rules and responsive interaction are also needed to reduce off-task behavior and sustain engagement (Yuni et al., 2024). Preliminary observation at SMA Negeri 1 Silaen indicated that the Catholic Religious Education teacher had attempted to create an orderly and comfortable learning atmosphere through communicative interaction, motivation, discussion, and short ice-breaking activities. These practices encouraged participation, but several problems remained, including tardiness, inconsistent attention, and uneven responsibility for completing learning tasks. This condition

suggests that the process through which classroom management supports discipline requires closer qualitative examination.

Previous studies have described classroom management strategies for addressing disciplinary problems in religious education and general classrooms (Lutfiati & Istikomah, 2022; Rahmaniar et al., 2023), while recent qualitative studies emphasize clear expectations, supportive relationships, positive reinforcement, and adaptive monitoring (Nabila et al., 2026; Renita et al., 2026). Other research highlights the importance of safe teacher-student relationships and school connectedness for participation and behavior (Graham et al., 2022; Liu et al., 2023), as well as the practical difficulties teachers face when disciplining students with varied characteristics and backgrounds (Fauziah & Fitriyeni, 2024). However, limited attention has been given to how teacher actions, student responses, and school-level confirmation converge within Catholic Religious Education. This study addresses that gap by integrating observation, interviews, and documentation from the teacher, principal, and students. Based on this background, this study aims to describe the classroom management strategies used by the Catholic Religious Education teacher to support students' learning discipline and to analyze the manifestations of students learning discipline at SMA Negeri 1 Silaen.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive design to understand classroom management practices and students' learning discipline as they occurred in the natural school setting. The design enabled the researchers to examine actions, experiences, and meanings from the perspectives of the informants and to provide a context-sensitive account of the relationship between classroom management practices and observable disciplinary behavior (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The study was conducted at SMA Negeri 1 Silaen because preliminary observation identified classroom management and learning discipline phenomena that were relevant to the research focus. Data collection was conducted from March to May 2026 through classroom observations during regular Catholic Religious Education lessons, interviews with the 10 informants, and examination of supporting documents. The field activities were sequenced from observation to interviews and document confirmation so that issues identified in the classroom could be explored and cross-checked across sources.

Informants were selected through purposive sampling and comprised 10 people: one principal (P), one Catholic Religious Education teacher (T), and eight students (S1-S8). The teacher was selected as the key informant because the teacher directly planned and implemented classroom management in the observed lessons. The principal was selected because of responsibility for academic supervision, school discipline policy, and evaluation of teacher performance. The eight students were selected because they directly participated in the teacher's classes and could describe their experiences of class rules, teacher responses, assignment completion, and classroom participation. The student informants provided varied classroom perspectives and enabled comparison between the teacher's account and students' responses. Primary data were obtained from observations and interviews, while secondary data consisted of learning documents, teaching materials, school regulations, activity photographs, and field notes.

Observation was used to examine the implementation of classroom management and students' disciplinary behavior during learning. The observation focused on three dimensions of classroom management: creating a conducive environment, maintaining optimal learning conditions, and guiding students to behave in an orderly manner. Student discipline was observed through compliance with rules, responsibility for completing assignments, and

participation during learning activities. In-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the principal, the Catholic Religious Education teacher, and the eight students using interview guidelines derived from the research indicators. The interviews explored the informants' experiences, interpretations, and assessments of classroom rules, teacher responses to disruption, assignment responsibility, and student participation. Documentation complemented the observation and interview data. The documents examined included teaching materials, school and classroom regulations, learning activity photographs, assignment-related records, and field notes. These materials were used to confirm the consistency between reported practices and observable evidence.

Data analysis followed the interactive stages of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing (Miles et al., 2020). First, observation notes, interview records, and documents were organized by source code (P, T, and S1-S8). The researchers then conducted first-cycle descriptive coding using codes derived from the research indicators, while retaining additional codes for recurring behaviors that emerged from the data. Similar codes were compared and grouped into subcategories, which were subsequently consolidated into two main categories: classroom management strategies and manifestations of students' learning discipline. A source-by-theme matrix was used to compare evidence from the principal, teacher, students, observations, and documents. Themes were retained when they were supported by convergent evidence, while differences or negative cases were recorded to avoid presenting discipline as uniform. The final thematic narratives were then verified through source triangulation and technique triangulation before conclusions were drawn.

To maintain confidentiality in reporting, the principal, teacher, and students are identified using the codes P, T, and S1-S8. These codes are used in the presentation of findings to clarify the empirical source of each theme.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The analysis produced two main categories: the classroom management strategies implemented by T and the manifestations of students' learning discipline. The findings were developed by comparing observation, interview, and documentation evidence from P, T, and S1-S8. Across the classroom management categories, the most consistently supported strategy was the combination of clear behavioral expectations with supportive communication and humane corrective guidance. Table 1 summarizes the categories, indicators, data sources, and triangulation results.

Table 1. Matrix of Main Findings and Data Triangulation

Category	Indicator	Data sources	Triangulation result
Classroom management strategy	Creating a conducive, orderly, disciplined, and engaging environment	T; P; S1-S8; observation; classroom rules and activity documents	Sources converged on clear expectations, respectful communication, and participatory interaction as the most prominent strategy.
Classroom management strategy	Maintaining optimal learning conditions	T; S1-S8; observation	Preventive monitoring, calm verbal reminders, and immediate redirection enabled students to rejoin learning without punitive or humiliating treatment.

Category	Indicator	Data sources	Triangulation result
Classroom management strategy	Guiding behavior	orderly T; S1-S8; observation; classroom routines	Repeated explanation, modeling, and practice consistently supported turn-taking, cooperation, permission-seeking, and self-control.
Students learning discipline	Compliance with school and classroom rules	T; S1-S8; observation; documentation	Most students complied with uniforms, duties, mobile-phone restrictions, and classroom rules; tardiness remained the main inconsistent behavior.
Students learning discipline	Responsibility for completing assignments	T; S1-S8; assignment-related documents	Most students completed tasks independently, but the evidence showed uneven timeliness and seriousness among several students.
Students learning discipline	Orderly participation in learning activities	T; S1-S8; observation	Participation was generally orderly and respectful, although occasional lapses in attention indicated that continued guidance was still required.

1. Classroom Management Strategies of the Catholic Religious Education Teacher

a. Creating a conducive, orderly, disciplined, and engaging learning environment

Classroom observation showed that T began learning by checking student readiness, reminding students of agreed rules, and establishing friendly communication. The rules emphasized punctuality, orderly participation, respect for classmates opinions, and attentiveness when another person was speaking. T also used discussion and question-and-answer activities to maintain attention and encourage participation, which made the classroom atmosphere more active and reduced student boredom.

Interview evidence supported the observation. T explained that discipline was introduced through clear expectations and a calm, respectful approach rather than through intimidation. Student informants reported that they were more comfortable asking questions and expressing opinions when the teacher responded patiently. The principal's account was consistent with the observed use of guidance and communication. Because this pattern appeared in observation and was confirmed by T, P, and S1-S8, the combination of behavioral clarity and supportive interaction was identified as the most prominent classroom management strategy in the study.

b. Maintaining optimal learning conditions

Before the lesson, T checked classroom order and student readiness. During learning, T monitored attention, movement, and interaction. When a student lost focus or disturbed a classmate, T used a calm verbal reminder and redirected the student to the task. T also adjusted interaction through discussion and brief questions so that students remained involved and the learning process continued without prolonged disruption.

Observation documented that corrective responses were delivered without physical punishment or humiliating language. Student interviews similarly indicated that the teacher usually explained the reason for a warning and gave the student an opportunity to rejoin the activity. This evidence shows that optimal conditions were maintained through preventive monitoring, immediate low-intensity correction, and re-engagement rather than through punitive control.

c. Guiding students to behave in an orderly manner

T repeatedly explained and reinforced the class rules before and during learning. Students were guided to wait for their turn, ask questions politely, listen to different opinions, cooperate in group activities, request permission before leaving the classroom, and control their behavior during transitions and breaks. These practices made orderliness part of the learning routine rather than an isolated response to misconduct.

Observation of classroom interaction showed that T provided direct reminders when students interrupted discussion and encouraged them to respond respectfully to their peers. Student informants also described the teacher's consistent reminders about cooperation and self-control. The empirical pattern indicates that orderly behavior was developed through repeated modeling, explanation, and practice.

2. Students Learning Discipline at SMA Negeri 1 Silaen

a. Compliance with school and classroom rules

Most students arrived before the lesson began, wore the required uniform, completed classroom duty according to the schedule, and refrained from using mobile phones during learning. These behaviors indicated compliance with routine school and classroom expectations. However, a small number of students still arrived late, showing that punctuality had not been internalized consistently by all students.

Observation and documentation of classroom routines were consistent with the teacher's account of generally orderly student behavior. In interviews, students who discussed tardiness linked it to inadequate preparation before leaving home and staying awake late to play games. This evidence identifies punctuality as the main remaining weakness within the rule-compliance dimension.

b. Responsibility for completing assignments

Most students submitted assignments according to the teacher's instructions and attempted to complete the work independently. The teacher's account and student interviews indicated that copying was discouraged and that students were reminded to take responsibility for their own work. Nevertheless, several students still needed repeated motivation and guidance to complete assignments seriously and on time.

The comparison of interview and documentation evidence shows that assignment responsibility was present but uneven. Students who completed tasks consistently demonstrated planning and independence, whereas those who delayed or approached tasks casually required closer monitoring. The finding therefore reflects a developing habit of responsibility rather than a uniformly established pattern.

c. Orderly participation in learning activities

During classroom observation, most students followed learning activities without disturbing classmates, listened during discussion, asked permission before leaving the room, and participated in the assigned activities. Students also reported an expectation not to cheat during tests. These behaviors show that discipline was expressed through self-control, academic honesty, and respect for the learning rights of others.

The teachers and students accounts were consistent with the observed pattern of generally orderly participation. However, occasional lapses in attention remained visible among some students. Across the three discipline indicators, the evidence therefore shows a positive but non-uniform pattern: most students complied with expectations, while a smaller group still required consistent guidance in punctuality, attention, and task responsibility.

Discussion

1. Classroom Management Strategies of the Catholic Religious Education Teacher

a. Creating a conducive, orderly, disciplined, and engaging learning environment

The findings indicate that a conducive classroom environment emerged from the interaction between clear behavioral expectations and relational support. Rules alone did not create order. T combined them with respectful communication, discussion, and opportunities for students to participate. This combination reduced psychological distance between teacher and students while preserving the teacher's instructional authority.

This finding supports Mulyasa's (2018) view that classroom management involves creating and maintaining optimal learning conditions. It is also consistent with recent studies showing that clear rules become more effective when combined with positive reinforcement, personal approaches, and supportive teacher-student relationships (Liu et al., 2023; Nurdian et al., 2025). In Catholic Religious Education, this supportive atmosphere provides a practical setting for learning respect, responsibility, and care for others.

The value-oriented character of Catholic Religious Education makes the relational dimension especially important. A calm and respectful response models the same moral conduct expected from students. Classroom management therefore functions simultaneously as instructional organization and as an example of value-consistent behavior.

b. Maintaining optimal learning conditions

The teacher maintained learning conditions through preparation, continuous monitoring, immediate verbal correction, and student re-engagement. These practices were primarily preventive and restorative. They limited disruption without separating the student from the learning process and allowed instruction to continue efficiently.

The finding is consistent with the concept that learning strategies organize teacher actions toward effective and directed learning (Sanjaya, 2021). It also aligns with evidence that effective classroom management and positive teacher-student relationships are associated with fewer disruptions and more favorable student perceptions of the learning environment (Wettstein et al., 2021). The teacher's low-intensity corrective responses were important because they protected classroom order while reducing the risk that correction became fear-based or humiliating.

The evidence further suggests that maintaining optimal conditions requires flexible instructional interaction. Discussion, questioning, and brief changes of activity were not merely teaching methods. They also served as management devices that redirected attention and prevented off-task behavior.

c. Guiding students to behave in an orderly manner

Orderly behavior was developed through repeated explanation, modeling, and practice. T did not treat discipline as a list of prohibitions. Students were taught concrete social behaviors, including turn-taking, respectful disagreement, cooperation, permission-seeking, and self-control during transitions.

This pattern is consistent with studies emphasizing educational guidance, role modeling, and value formation by religious education teachers (Ginting & Gurning, 2024; Rahmaniar et

al., 2023). It also supports findings that collective routines and positive reinforcement can strengthen responsibility and orderly behavior when applied consistently (Maulidya et al., 2025). The present study adds that discipline formation becomes more sustainable when expected behavior is embedded in daily learning routines.

Accordingly, the teacher's strategy can be understood as formative classroom management. Its purpose was not only to stop disruption but also to help students understand why orderly conduct, responsibility, and mutual respect are necessary for collective learning.

2. Students Learning Discipline at SMA Negeri 1 Silaen

a. Compliance with rules

Students' compliance was visible in punctual attendance for most learners, proper uniform use, completion of classroom duty, and limited mobile-phone use during learning. These behaviors correspond to recent findings that classroom rules and teacher monitoring contribute to the formation of student discipline (Angela & Fathoni, 2022; Aulia et al., 2025). The remaining cases of tardiness show, however, that formal compliance does not always indicate complete self-regulation. Habits outside school, including late-night gaming and inadequate preparation, affected punctuality.

b. Responsibility for completing assignments

Assignment completion reflected students responsibility for academic obligations. Most students submitted work and attempted to complete it independently, while some still required repeated encouragement. This variation indicates that responsibility was developing at different levels across students and should not be described using a single subjective category such as good or poor.

The finding supports the view that discipline develops through continuous habituation, monitoring, and reinforcement rather than through a single intervention. Regular deadlines, reminders, feedback, and consistent classroom routines help convert externally prompted compliance into a more stable learning habit (Maulidya et al., 2025; Renita et al., 2026).

c. Orderly participation in learning activities

Orderly participation was reflected in students' willingness to listen, avoid disrupting peers, request permission, participate in discussion, and uphold academic honesty. These behaviors are consistent with evidence that connectedness, supportive relationships, and fair discipline practices shape students' attitudes toward school and participation (Graham et al., 2022). They also show that learning discipline includes interpersonal and ethical conduct, not only punctuality and task completion.

Taken together, the findings show that classroom management and learning discipline were connected through repeated daily practices. Clear expectations, communicative interaction, corrective guidance, and routine participation created conditions in which students could practice self-control and responsibility. The study's contribution is to demonstrate this process specifically within Catholic Religious Education and to show that classroom order can function as a medium for character formation rather than merely as behavioral control.

CONCLUSION

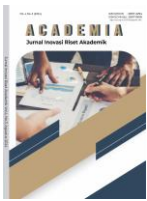
The study concludes that the Catholic Religious Education teacher's classroom management strategies supported the conditions required for students' learning discipline by combining clear expectations, preventive organization, calm corrective responses, and continuous guidance. The most prominent strategy, supported consistently by the principal, teacher, students, observation, and documentation, was the establishment of clear behavioral

expectations combined with supportive communication and humane corrective guidance. These practices were reflected in three observable dimensions: compliance with school and classroom rules, responsibility for completing assignments, and orderly participation in learning activities. Discipline was not uniform because lateness, lapses in attention, and inconsistent task responsibility persisted among some students. Classroom management therefore functioned not only as behavioral control but also as a pedagogical process for developing responsibility, self-control, and mutual respect.

The findings imply that Catholic Religious Education teachers should apply consistent rules, participatory learning methods, and nonviolent corrective guidance while providing targeted support to students who repeatedly experience difficulties with punctuality, attention, or assignment completion. School leaders should reinforce these practices through academic supervision and coordinated discipline policies. Future studies should involve more classes or schools and use complete interview transcripts to examine how classroom management and learning discipline develop over time.

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