

EFFECTIVENESS OF HOMOGENEOUS GROUPING BASED ON STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS IN THE ENGLISH LEARNING PROCESS IN GRADE 7 AT SMPN 3 SIKUR

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ABSTRACT

In order to improve the English learning environment for seventh-grade students at SMPN 3 Sikur, this study examines the efficacy of homogenous grouping based on student character qualities. In order to measure changes in students' learning focus, comfort, motivation, and classroom engagement before and after the deployment of character-based homogenous grouping, the study used a quantitative descriptive technique with a One-Group Pretest-Posttest Design. A Likert-scale questionnaire was used to gather data from 26 pupils. With an average score of 20.76, which indicates low learning comfort and attentiveness, the pretest findings demonstrated that pupils encountered a variety of learning disturbances in a diverse classroom context. The posttest score rose to 30.03 after four sessions with homogeneous grouping, indicating a notable improvement in student engagement, attentiveness, and comfort in the classroom. Grouping pupils with comparable traits promoted greater responsibility, independence, and active engagement in learning, as seen by the gain score of 31.10%, which categorized the increase as high. These results imply that homogeneous grouping according to student attributes may be a useful classroom management technique to establish a more favorable and effective learning environment

Keywords: Homogeneous Grouping, Student Character, Classroom Management, Learning Focus, English Learning

Article History

Received: Desember 2025
Reviewed: Desember 2025
Published: Desember 2025

Plagiarism Checker No 234
Prefix DOI : Prefix DOI : 10.8734/Sindoro.v1i2.365

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Publish by : Sindoro



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INTRODUCTION

Education plays an important role in developing the full potential of students. This is in line with the definition of education in Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System Article 1 Paragraph (1), which states that "Education is a conscious and planned effort to create a learning atmosphere and learning process so that students actively develop their potential to have religious spiritual strength, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble character, as well as the skills needed by themselves, the community, the nation, and the state." (Education et al., 2024) This definition shows that education does not only focus on academic aspects, but also shapes the character, morals, and skills of students so that they can contribute positively to society and the nation.

Good classroom management will improve the quality of learning and help students reach their potential (Budiya, 2021). Therefore, teachers must be able to manage the classroom and determine the appropriate learning methods so that learning objectives can be achieved properly. Teachers must have proper planning so that learning activities are carried out on target (Widyaningrum & Hasanah, 2021).

Classroom management is all conscious efforts to develop the potential of each student optimally and proportionally through the skills of educators in creating, planning, applying, actualizing, controlling, and supervising various classroom activities and work programs so as to create a conducive, effective, efficient, focused, comfortable, and enjoyable learning climate. In general, the role of teachers in managing the classroom is: 1) Encouraging students to develop individual responsibility for their environment. 2) Building students' understanding so that they understand and adjust their behavior to classroom rules. 3) Creating a sense of obligation to involve themselves in tasks and behavior appropriate to classroom activities (Sirojuddin, n.d.).

Improving the quality of learning is one of the main objectives in education (Bararah, 2020), especially in the modern era which requires students to have critical thinking, creative, collaborative, and communicative skills (Gymnastiar, 2024). (Tara et al., 2025) However, various problems in classroom management remain a significant challenge in achieving this goal. One of the main problems faced is the lack of effective classroom management strategies (Widyaningrum & Hasanah, 2021), which results in low student engagement, suboptimal interaction between teachers and students, and high levels of disruption in the classroom. Without good management, learning is often hampered (Zahra, 2022), making it difficult for teachers to create an atmosphere that supports active and productive learning processes.

English language learning at the junior high school level, especially in 7th grade, often faces various challenges, particularly in terms of classroom management and student character differences. The learning process in the classroom often presents challenges related to student diversity. In a single class, teachers often encounter students with very different personalities, such as students who are diligent, quiet, active, creative, to students who tend to be lazy, undisciplined, or often engage in deviant behavior (mischievous). These differences in character directly affect the dynamics of learning, interactions between students, and the level of focus and attention of students during teaching and learning activities. Heterogeneous classroom conditions also require a flexible approach (Tulak et al., 2024), where teachers need to be able to adjust management methods to different situations and classroom dynamics (Pratiwi et al., 2024). If classroom management strategies are not designed and implemented effectively, the impact will be felt in low student motivation and suboptimal learning outcomes (Adiarti, 2014).

It is often found that teachers conduct heterogeneous grouping, where students with low learning motivation and who tend to be lazy are grouped with diligent students, with the intention that students with low learning interest and who tend to be lazy or misbehave can be helped and motivated by their diligent friends who have high learning motivation. However, this method does not always work when applied in the classroom. Students who exhibit deviant or unruly behavior will usually disturb their more diligent peers who are highly motivated to learn if they are in the same group. The negative impact of this disruptive student behavior can reduce learning time and decrease overall learning productivity. Research shows that classes with higher levels of disruptive behavior have lower academic achievement (Konert & Bellh, 2024). These findings reinforce that placing students who exhibit deviant behavior in groups with diligent students not only hinders group performance but also reduces the overall quality of the learning process.

Based on this phenomenon, the author came up with the idea of trying a strategy of grouping students homogeneously based on their characteristics, whereby students with similar behavioral tendencies, such as being lazy, undisciplined, or often disruptive, would be grouped together, and students who were diligent and often paid attention in class would be grouped together. This strategy aims to see whether, when grouped with friends with similar characteristics, they will be more aware of their learning responsibilities, more focused, and more attentive to the teacher because there are no “diligent” students to rely on when doing assignments and “covering up” their behavior.

In addition, homogeneous grouping can provide an opportunity for teachers to understand student behavior patterns more deeply, provide more targeted learning treatments, and create a controlled learning environment without affecting other students who have high learning motivation.

Therefore, it is important to examine whether grouping students homogeneously based on character can have a positive impact on learning focus, student attention, and learning effectiveness in the classroom. This research is expected to provide teachers with new insights into implementing more efficient classroom management strategies that are tailored to students' character needs.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a quantitative approach, which is an approach used to examine a specific population or sample, using research instruments and quantitative or statistical data analysis to test hypotheses [Sugiyono, 2023:25]. The type of research used by the researcher is descriptive. In quantitative methods, descriptive research is research that measures one or more values independently [Sugiyono, 2023:68]. This study aims to determine how students feel and experience learning in classes with and without homogeneous grouping. Do students feel disturbed by the deviant and potentially disruptive behavior of other students in the classroom when learning is carried out as usual without grouping, and conversely, do they feel that the classroom atmosphere becomes more conducive and comfortable when learning in the classroom is carried out in groups based on their characters?

The data collection technique used a questionnaire. [Sugiyono, 2025:234] A questionnaire is a data collection technique conducted by giving a set of questions or statements to respondents to answer. A questionnaire is an efficient data collection technique because researchers know exactly what variables to measure and what to expect from respondents. The subjects in this study were all 29 students in grade 7 at SMPN 3 Sikur, consisting of 15 boys and 14 girls. The selection of classes was based on the age and diversity of student characters in one class. The researcher chose grade 7 because it was considered to be in a transitional age and had various characters, such as diligent, lazy, passive, active, and undisciplined. This diversity of character was the basis for dividing the subjects into homogeneous groups at the treatment stage.

The specific design used was the One-Group Pretest-Posttest Design. This design was chosen based on the research objective to measure the effectiveness of a treatment (intervention) on one group of subjects without a control/comparison group, where measurements were taken before and after the treatment (Creswell, 2014). The research design pattern can be described as follows:

O_1 X O_2 (Sugiyono, 2019)

Description:

- O_1 : Pre-test (Questionnaire to determine students' initial conditions and readiness to learn).
- X : Treatment (Application of group learning based on character (homogeneous))
- O_2 : Post-test (questionnaire to determine the condition of students after grouping is implemented)

This study aims to determine the level of learning focus, the level of comfort in the learning process, the level of learning disruption, and student learning motivation in classes with and without homogeneous grouping. Does student behavior that deviates and tends to be disruptive in the classroom interfere with learning when lessons are conducted as usual without grouping? Conversely, do students feel that the classroom atmosphere becomes more conducive and comfortable when lessons are conducted in groups based on their characteristics?

A Data collection techniques

Data collection techniques use questionnaires. [Sugiyono, 2025:234] Questionnaires are data collection techniques carried out by giving a set of questions or statements to respondents to answer. Questionnaires are an efficient data collection technique because researchers know exactly what variables will be measured and what to expect from respondents.

B Research subjects

The subjects in this study were all 26 seventh-grade students at SMPN 3 Sikur, consisting 12 boys and 14 girls. The class was selected based on the age and diversity of the students in one class. The researcher chose grade 7 because they were considered to be in a transitional age and had various characteristics, such as diligent, lazy, passive, active, and undisciplined. This diversity of characteristics was the basis for the homogeneous grouping at the treatment stage.

The research procedure was carried out as follows:

C Research Procedure

The research procedure was carried out in two stages, with the first stage taking place during meetings 1-5 and the second stage during meetings 6-10. In the first stage, learning was carried out as usual without grouping. At this stage, the teacher observed whether students experienced obstacles or disturbances in receiving lessons, such as difficulty focusing, feeling disturbed, and difficulty accepting lessons. At the end of this stage, a pre-questionnaire or Likert scale questionnaire was given to students before group-based learning was implemented. The questionnaire contained statements to find out whether they experienced learning obstacles before the implementation of homogeneous grouping. The second stage is carried out in meetings 6-10, where the teacher will apply the homogeneous grouping method based on student characteristics. In the tenth meeting, a post-questionnaire is administered to find out whether there are changes in feelings, increased focus, increased comfort in the classroom, and the level of student understanding during the learning process after the implementation of group learning.

D Research instruments

The data collection instrument used a Likert scale questionnaire containing three options: agree, unsure, and disagree. The questionnaire was compiled based on the following indicators:

Variable	Indicator	Example questions
Learning comfort	Conducive classroom atmosphere	I feel more comfortable learning after group learning sessions
Self-confidence	Confident when studying with friends	I feel more confident when studying with friends who have similar abilities to me.
Interaction and Engagement in Education	Active participation in learning	During group learning tasks, I feel more involved.
Motivation for learning	Enhanced drive and excitement for learning	After taking part in the exercise, I believe my desire to learn increased.
Enhanced drive and excitement for learning	Enhanced capacity for learning	After taking part in group learning, I believe my learning abilities have improved.

To ensure the quality of the questionnaire instruments used in the study, the researchers conducted a validation and reliability test process through an Expert Judgment mechanism carried out by the Teaching Assistance Mentor Teacher. At this stage, the validator assessed the suitability of each questionnaire item with the variable indicators listed in the Teaching Module to ensure content validity and instrument construction feasibility (Arikunto, 2013). This principle is in line with the language evaluation theory proposed by Brown (2004), which states that content validity must be fulfilled so that the instrument truly represents the aspects to be measured (content representativeness). Based on the expert assessment results, all items in the questionnaire were declared feasible, valid, and reliable so that they could be used in research without requiring additional empirical statistical tests.

E Data Analysis Techniques

The data obtained from the questionnaire was analyzed using descriptive quantitative techniques. This technique was used to see if there were any changes in students before and after the implementation of homogeneous group-based learning based on student characteristics.

Data analysis was carried out using the following steps:

- 1) Scoring questionnaire responses
Each alternative response on the questionnaire is scored using a 3-point Likert scale:
 - Agree (S) = 3
 - Hesitant (RR) = 2
 - Disagree (TS) = 1
- 2) Calculate the total score for each student
Each student's score is added up to determine the total pre-test and post-test scores.

3) Calculating the average value (mean)

The average is measured to determine the learning tendency of students before and after treatment using the formula

$$\bar{X} = \frac{\sum X}{N}$$

Description

X= average

$\sum X$ = total score

N= number of student

4) Calculating the percentage increase (gain score)

Changes in learning conditions are calculated using the difference between the pre-test and post-test average scores using the following formula:

$$\text{Gain score} = \frac{\text{Mean post test} - \text{mean pre test}}{\text{Mean post test}} \times 100\%$$

5) Interpreting the improvement category

The gain score results are interpreted using the following criteria:

- Height improvement → > 30%
- Moderat improvement → 15% - 30%
- Low improvement → < 15%

Using this technique, the effectiveness of homogeneous group learning can be determined by comparing pre-test and post-test results. If the post-test score is higher than the pre-test score, then the effectiveness of homogeneous group learning in improving student comfort, confidence, engagement, motivation, and learning outcomes is higher.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

This section describes the research findings obtained from data analyzed using quantitative techniques on 26 students in class C at SMPN 3 Sikur.

This section describes the research findings obtained from quantitative data analysis of 26 students in class 7 at SMPN 3 Sikur. The analysis began with a description of the students' initial conditions by giving them a questionnaire (pre-test) to map their conditions and feelings in class before learning with the homogeneous group method was applied.

Analysis of the initial conditions of students English for Specific Purposes The analysis began with scoring the answers on the Likert questionnaire that had been filled out by the students of class 7C. Before the questionnaire was given, one learning session was held without grouping. This was done with the aim of providing learning experiences to students before group learning was carried out, so that when filling out the questionnaire, they could fill it out according to their previous experiences.

The results of the pre-test questionnaire given to students before the implementation of the homogeneous grouping method showed that many students felt disturbed and uncomfortable with the class being uncondusive and noisy. After calculating the average, it was found that the average pre-test score was 20.76. This figure shows that before the grouping method was applied, most students were in suboptimal learning conditions and had difficulties due to learning disturbances in the classroom, such as being easily distracted by the disruptive and noisy behavior of their peers, which caused a lack of focus and interest in learning. Students also felt that they were not sufficiently involved in the learning process, which was another cause of their lack of interest in learning.

Therefore, the researcher concluded that the score of 20.76 not only described the low level of student readiness to learn but also indicated the need for more appropriate classroom management strategies that could help students in the learning process so that learning objectives could be achieved properly. This figure will be used as a basis for comparison to test the effectiveness of the treatment that will be carried out in the next stage, namely the application of group learning methods based on student characteristics.

After implementing homogeneous group learning for four sessions, a post-test questionnaire was administered, and the average student score was 30.03, which was an increase from the previous pre-test score. This increase indicates that students felt more comfortable, focused, and actively participated in learning when they were placed in groups that suited their characters. This learning strategy enables students to develop responsibility and independence in learning and not depend on diligent or dominant friends. These findings are in line with the opinions of Bararah (2020) and Gymnastiar (2024), who emphasize that learning that accommodates students' characteristics and needs can increase psychological comfort, activity, and learning motivation.

Furthermore, a gain test was conducted, which showed a score of 31.10%, which falls into the high category. Therefore, it can be concluded that the application of homogeneous learning has a significant effect on students' learning conditions and motivation. The high gain value reinforces the argument that grouping students homogeneously not only affects the class situationally but also substantially affects the quality of students' learning experiences.

Theoretically, these findings show that the success of learning does not only depend on the learning method, but it is also necessary to pay attention to classroom management strategies. Widyaningrum & Hasanah (2021) emphasize that appropriate classroom management techniques can create a conducive, efficient, and learner-oriented learning environment. In the context of this study, homogeneous grouping was chosen as a classroom management strategy that takes into account the various characteristics of students and utilizes them to build a conducive learning environment and healthy learning interactions.

In addition, these findings provide an opportunity for critical thinking. The homogeneous grouping strategy has been proven to increase student focus and engagement. However, this method is not necessarily suitable for all learning contexts. In order for the formation of homogeneous groups to remain objective and not give students negative labels, teachers must thoroughly understand the characteristics of each student and observe their behavior consistently. Therefore, to avoid stigma or feelings of insecurity towards certain groups, this strategy must be implemented with pedagogical ethics in mind.

Thus, learning based on homogeneous grouping can be recommended as an alternative classroom management strategy to improve student comfort, focus, and learning motivation, especially in classes with diverse characters and strong interpersonal dynamics. This strategy can be expanded or modified in subsequent studies, for example, by testing its impact on academic learning outcomes, collaborative skills, or other affective domains. The findings of this study are expected to enrich practical references for teachers and schools in designing learning that suits the needs of students' characters.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of research conducted on 7th grade students at SMPN 3 Sikur, it was concluded that the application of homogeneous learning methods based on student character proved to be effective in improving the quality of the English learning process. Before the

treatment was carried out, students showed that they experienced various learning disorders, lacked focus, and felt uncomfortable due to heterogeneous and tends to be unfavorable classroom dynamics, with an average pre-test score of 20.76.

After homogeneous group learning was implemented for four meetings, there was a significant increase in student comfort, focus, activity, and learning motivation, as indicated by a post-test score of 30.03. The gain test result of 31.10%, which is in the high category, reinforces that the treatment had a substantial positive impact on the students' learning experience.

The homogeneous grouping strategy allows students to be more responsible for the learning process, not dependent on more diligent friends, and encourages increased involvement in learning. These findings are in line with the theories of Bararah (2020) and Gymnastiar (2024), which state the importance of learning that pays attention to students' needs and characteristics to increase comfort and learning motivation.

Thus, homogeneous grouping can be recommended as an alternative classroom management strategy for teachers, especially in classes with high student diversity. However, this strategy must still be implemented wisely and take into account the circumstances of students in each class so as not to create stigma or negative labels for certain groups. Further research can develop the application of this strategy in other aspects, such as academic learning outcomes or students' collaborative skills.

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