

A Comparison of Classroom Management and Lesson Scheduling Elementary School in Southeast Asia: Implications for Student Learning Processes and Outcomes

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the differences in classroom management, lesson planning, student learning processes, and overall impressions of primary education in Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, and the Philippines. The method used was a comparative descriptive qualitative method where data were collected through interviews with teachers from the four countries and analyzed comparatively to identify patterns, challenges and strengths in each country's primary education system. The results show that Indonesia and the Philippines emphasize a more democratic approach to classroom management, while Thailand uses a more authoritative model and Malaysia is somewhere in between with a balance between discipline and student engagement. In terms of lesson planning, Indonesia and Malaysia use a flexible structure while still following national curriculum guidelines, while Thailand is more-strict and the Philippines has the most dynamic system. Learning and assessment methods also vary, with Indonesia and Thailand combining written exams and project-based assessments, Malaysia focusing more on standardized assessments, and the Philippines emphasizing reflective assessments and real-world applications. The conclusion of this study confirms that despite differences in educational approaches, all countries face similar challenges, such as limited resources, differences in students' learning pace, and gaps in access to educational technology. Therefore, the study recommends the integration of more flexible learning strategies, improved teacher training, and more adaptive curriculum reforms to improve the effectiveness and inclusiveness of basic education systems in Southeast Asia.

Keywords: Classroom Management, Learning Scheduling, Student Learning Process, and Primary Education

INTRODUCTION

There are several reasons why classroom management and lesson timing are essential to the success of the learning process in primary schools. Good classroom management promotes the classroom as a safe environment for learning, provides the basis for student engagement and expectation setting, and fosters positive behaviors (Egeberg et al., 2021). Conversely, effective planning of the lesson schedule allocates time proportionately and efficiently so that all relevant competencies can be optimally achieved (Elokda et al., 2024). A discussion of classroom management and lesson planning is relevant to understanding how these practices contribute to student learning outcomes. Education systems in the Southeast Asian region have their own methods of classroom management and scheduling. Culture, educational policies, and school resources determine the feasibility of these strategies (Navaridas-Nalda et al., 2020). Insights from comparative studies on these two aspects in the region can be very enriching, especially on what are the advantages and disadvantages of the path chosen by each country.

However, classroom management and scheduling issues remain a major concern. Ineffective classroom management leads to interruptions in the teaching-learning process, while unstructured or unbalanced schedules can lead to student fatigue and a mismatch between time and learning (Wettstein et al., 2021). Such issues are directly related to student learning outcomes. And both classroom interruptions can decrease student focus and ultimately learning outcomes, and scheduling can impact students with material and study time (Kraft & Monti-Nussbaum, 2021). Ultimately, this results in students struggling to perform academically and to be better prepared for the next stage of their schooling.

There is an urgent need for evidence-based methods of adaptive classroom management. These methods will be applied not only to improve the learning process but also to ensure quality assurance of student learning outcomes. This study will also find a direct impact on the learning process such as level engagement and also the efficiency of teaching. An advantage of this solution is that it can be used to tailor approaches to classroom management and lesson plans according to the needs of students in different contexts (Gold et al., 2021). It will help to improve the quality of learning with less stress for students and save time, thus providing a holistic learning experience.

Classroom management and scheduling have been well studied in case studies. In an investigation in Southeast Asia by (Kunaviktikul et al., 2022) cited the importance of flexibility in scheduling to accommodate cultural diversity. Similarly by (Havik & Westergård, 2020) noted that although classroom management focuses on the functioning of the classroom, others also emphasized that classroom management should not only concern the functioning of the classroom, but also the way in which students are engaged in learning. However, local or cross-country comparative work on these two aspects simultaneously is still scarce in the Southeast Asian region.

Research by (Lumbantobing et al., 2020) explains the results that the better the classroom management carried out by the teacher, the better the student learning outcomes. Researcher (Lumbantobing et al., 2020) used a simple regression analysis method by taking a sample of 56 public elementary school students. The research by (Nguyen et al., 2020) showed that there was a significant impact on increasing knowledge for teachers and students in Vietnam and Cambodia. Research (Nguyen et al., 2020) used experimental analysis. This study offers empirical novelty by analyzing the differences and similarities between countries in Southeast Asia regarding classroom management and lesson scheduling. Methodologically, this study uses a cross-country comparative approach that has not been widely applied in previous studies. In terms of context, this research highlights the implications on student learning outcomes, something that has not been discussed much in depth in the region.

The urgency of this research lies in the need to understand how education systems in Southeast Asia can learn from each other in addressing challenges related to classroom management and scheduling. This research is expected to make an important contribution to more adaptive and inclusive education policies. The purpose of this study is to compare classroom management and scheduling practices in primary schools in Southeast Asia and to analyze their impact on student learning processes and outcomes. The results of this study are expected to serve as a reference for education policy makers and educators in improving the quality of learning in the region.

METHOD

Research Design

This study aims to analyze and compare the Comparative Classroom Management and Lesson Schedule of Elementary Schools in Southeast Asian Countries by using comparative descriptive qualitative method. The research phase begins with a literature study that includes a review of educational literature, and conducting interviews with elementary school teachers in the Philippines, Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia as well as analyzing official curriculum documents. Furthermore, the research will identify an analytical framework that includes comparison criteria such as Classroom Management, Lesson Scheduling, Student Learning Processes, Overall Impressions, and Additional Comments.

Sample Collection Technique

In this study on Comparison of Classroom Management and Elementary School Lesson Schedules in the Philippines, Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia, the researcher used purposive sampling method to select informants carefully. The criteria for selecting informants involved the education office, elementary school principals, and elementary school teachers in the Philippines, Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia. Thus, 16 informants were selected in this study

Data Collection Techniques

The collection is done through official sources such as government websites, textbooks, and interviews with teachers. The collected data will be analyzed using a comparative descriptive approach, focusing on similarities,

differences and emerging patterns. The advantages of this method include thoroughness of description, contextual understanding, and in-depth comparative ability. Data collection involved semi-structured interviews with elementary school teachers in the Philippines, Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to gain an in-depth understanding from the teachers' perspectives regarding the Comparison of Classroom Management and Elementary School Lesson Schedules.

Data Analysis

Data analysis in this study using the Miles and Huberman interactive model provides significant benefits in exploring in-depth and contextual understanding related to Comparison of Classroom Management and Primary School Lesson Schedules in Southeast Asian Countries in Implications for Student Learning Processes and Outcomes.

RESULT

Research Informant

In the context of the research, coding and grouping informants from the data collected from interviews, observations and documentation plays a crucial role in the analysis process. Grouping informants allows researchers to compare and contrast information between different groups or individuals, supporting an understanding of the demographic context that influences informants' perspectives:

Table 1. Research Informant

No.	Country	Name	Gender	Position	Year of Entry	Length of Teaching
1.	Philippines	T-MD	Male	Teacher 1	2025	< 1 years
		T-MJA	Female	Teacher 2	2023	3 years
		T-MJ	Male	Teacher 3	2022	3 years
		T-MSD	Female	Teacher 4	2023	2 years
2.	Thailand	T-MSN	Female	Teacher 1	2015	10 years
		T-MA	Male	Teacher 2	2017	8 years
3.	Malaysia	T-MR	Male	Teacher 1	2018	7 years
		MS-A	Female	Teacher 2	2020	5 years
4.	Indonesia	T-IK	Female	Vice Principal	2010	15 years
		KS-BY	Male	Principal 1	2012	13 years
		T-BI	Female	Teacher 2	2013	12 years
		KS-MI	Female	Principal 2	2008	17 years
		T-BA	Male	Teacher 3	2019	6 years
		T-BD	Male	Teacher 4	2019	6 years
		T-IF	Female	Teacher 5	2021	4 years
		T-IA	Female	Teacher 6	2024	1 years

RESEARCH FINDINGS

During data collection activities through interviews with teachers in the Philippines, Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia, the following findings were obtained based informant:

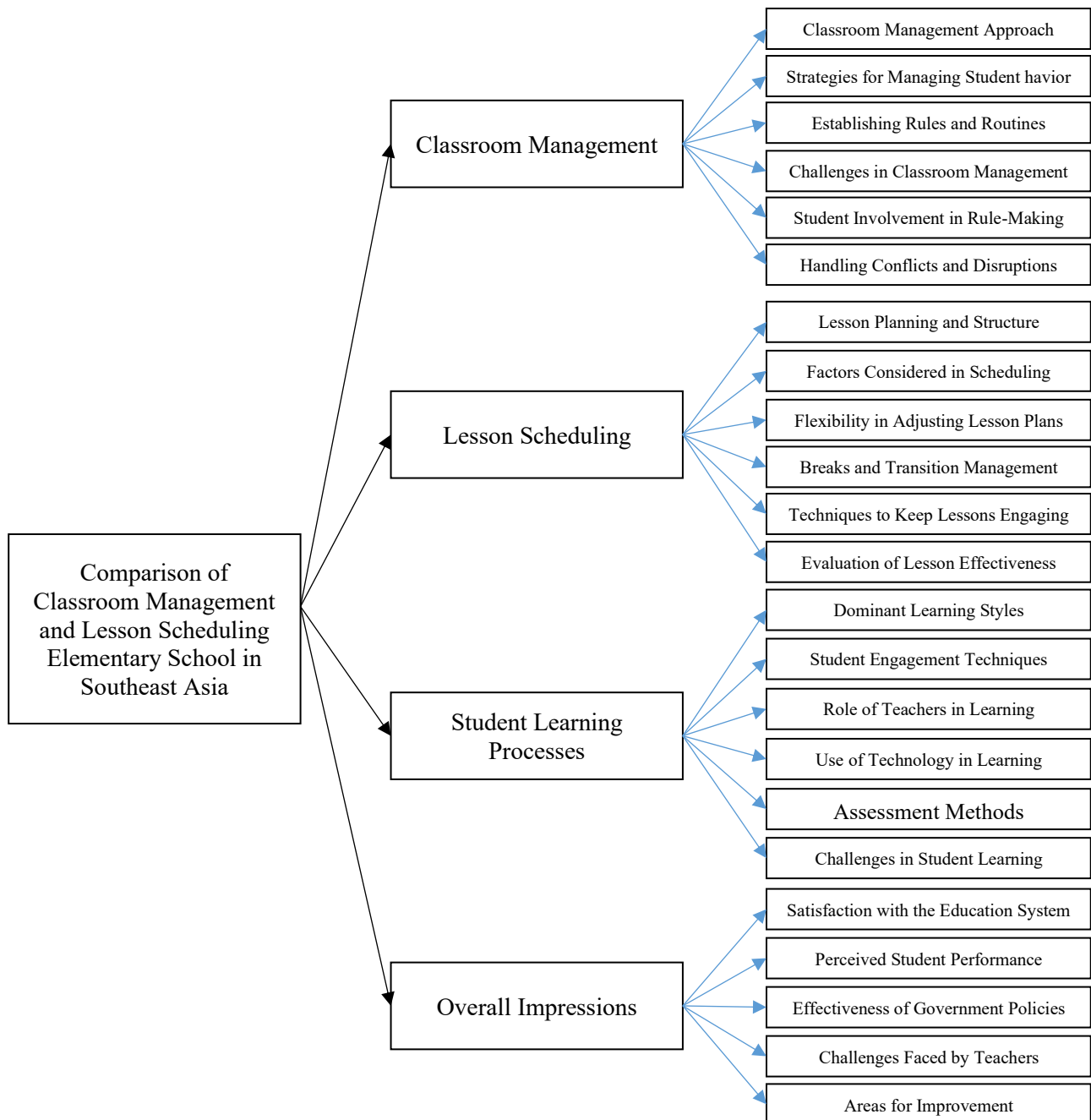


Figure 1.

Comparative Overview of Classroom Management in Primary Schools

Classroom management is a crucial factor in determining the effectiveness of teaching and learning in primary schools. The way teachers manage student behavior, establish rules, and handle conflicts significantly impacts the learning environment and student outcomes. In Southeast Asia, classroom management approaches vary based on cultural values, educational policies, and school structures. Some countries emphasize discipline and strict adherence to rules, while others promote student autonomy and collaborative rule-making. This study provides a comparative analysis of classroom management in Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, and the Philippines, based on teacher interviews conducted in each country. The insights from these teachers highlight different approaches to handling student behavior, implementing classroom rules, and overcoming management challenges. Understanding these variations can help educators develop more effective classroom management strategies that cater to students' diverse learning needs.

Table 2. Comparative Overview of Classroom Management in Primary Schools

Aspect	Indonesia	Malaysia	Thailand	Philippines
Classroom Management Approach	Democratic and student-centered, allowing students to actively participate in rule-making (T-BA, T-BD, T-IK)	Structured yet flexible, balancing discipline and student engagement. (T-MR, MS-A)	Authoritative, emphasizing strict discipline and adherence to school rules. (T-MSN, T-MA)	Democratic, encouraging student participation in decision-making. (T-MD, T-MJA, T-MJ), T-MSD)
Strategies for Managing Student Behavior	Positive reinforcement and collaborative discussions on expected behavior. (T-BA, T-BD)	Point-based reward system and structured reinforcement mechanisms. (T-MR)	Reward and punishment system, focusing on rule compliance. (T-MSN, T-MA)	Positive reinforcement combined with student reflection and dialogue. (T-MD, T-MJA)
Establishing Rules and Routines	Rules are set at the beginning of the academic year through student discussions and displayed in class. (T-IA, T-IF, KS-BY, KS-MI)	Rules are collaboratively created with students and reinforced through routine reminders. (T-MR, MS-A)	Rules are determined by the school administration and strictly enforced by teachers. (T-MA)	Students are actively involved in creating classroom norms to foster a sense of ownership. (T-MD, Ann T-MJA)
Challenges in Classroom Management	Managing diverse student backgrounds and maintaining consistency in rule enforcement. (T-BI, T-BD, T-BA, T-IK, T-IA)	Balancing different attention spans and motivation levels among students. (MS-A)	Finding a middle ground between discipline and active learning strategies. (T-MSN, T-MA)	Some students struggle with following rules due to varying home environments. (T-MJA, T-MJ, T-MD)
Student Involvement in Rule-Making	Students participate in setting classroom rules through discussions. (T-BD, T-BA, T-IF)	Students engage in discussions to agree on class norms and behavior expectations. (M-SA)	Rules are primarily set by teachers, with minimal student input. (T-MA, T-MSN)	Interactive workshops help students understand classroom expectations and contribute to rule-making. (T-MJA, T-MJ, T-MD)
Handling Conflicts and Disruptions	Open dialogue and peer mediation to resolve conflicts. (T-IK, KS-BY, KS-MI, T-BA, T-IF)	Teacher-led mediation, encouraging students to reflect on their behavior. (T-MR, MS-A)	Strict disciplinary measures, including written warnings and parent involvement. (T-MA)	Restorative justice approach, where students engage in conversations to resolve issues. (T-MD, T-MJA, T-MJ, T-MSD)

The analysis of classroom management across Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, and the Philippines reveals significant variations in how teachers regulate student behavior, establish rules, and address conflicts. Indonesia and the Philippines adopt democratic classroom management styles, allowing students to participate in rule-making and behavioral expectations. This approach fosters a sense of responsibility and engagement among students. In contrast, Thailand follows a more authoritative approach, with strict enforcement of rules set by the school administration. Malaysia balances both approaches, incorporating student engagement while maintaining structured reinforcement systems to ensure discipline.

The way teachers handle classroom conflicts also varies. Indonesia and the Philippines rely on open dialogue and peer mediation, encouraging students to resolve issues collaboratively. Malaysia adopts a reflective mediation approach, while Thailand enforces stricter disciplinary measures, often involving parental intervention. Despite these differences, all four countries face common challenges, such as handling diverse student behaviors, ensuring consistent rule enforcement, and balancing discipline with student autonomy. Moving forward, integrating restorative conflict resolution, blended disciplinary methods, and student-led rule-making can enhance classroom management and create more inclusive learning environments across Southeast Asia.

Comparative Overview of Lesson Scheduling in Primary Schools

Lesson scheduling plays a crucial role in shaping the learning experience of primary school students. The way lessons are planned, structured, and adapted determines how effectively students engage with the curriculum. Across Southeast Asia, different countries employ unique scheduling strategies, considering factors such as subject integration, student needs, time availability, and flexibility in lesson planning. This study examines lesson scheduling practices in Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, and the Philippines based on teacher interviews. By analyzing how educators organize their lesson plans, manage transitions, and incorporate breaks, we can gain insights into the strengths and challenges of different scheduling models in primary education.

Table 3. Comparative Overview of Lesson Scheduling in Primary Schools

Aspect	Indonesia	Malaysia	Thailand	Philippines
Lesson Planning and Structure	Weekly lesson plans with a mix of core and extracurricular subjects. (T-BA, T-BD)	Balanced lesson plans incorporating STEM, humanities, and arts. (T-MR, MS-A)	Structured lesson sequences with clear daily objectives. (T-MA, T-MSN)	Flexible scheduling based on student engagement and project-based learning. (T-MSD, T-MJ, T-MD)

Factors Considered in Scheduling	Student attention span, subject integration, and national curriculum guidelines. (KS-MI, KS-BY, T-IA)	Time availability, subject depth, and student workload balance. (T-MR, MS-A)	Alignment with national learning standards and cultural subjects. (T-MSN)	Student feedback, local cultural integration, and real-world application. (T-MSD, T-MJ, T-MD)
Flexibility in Adjusting Lesson Plans	Moderate flexibility, allowing teachers to modify activities based on student response. (T-IK, T-IF, T-IA, T-BI)	Teachers adjust pacing but must adhere to structured lesson plans. (T-MR)	Limited flexibility due to strict syllabus requirements. (T-MSN, T-MA)	Highly flexible, allowing teachers to adapt lessons based on student needs. (T-MD, TMJ)
Breaks and Transition Management	Short breaks between subjects, longer recess periods in the morning and afternoon. (T-IK, T-IF, T-IA, T-BI)	Short breaks to maintain focus, structured recess times. (M-SA)	Fixed break periods, some schools integrate mindfulness exercises. (T-MA)	Flexible break schedules based on classroom energy levels. (T-MSD, T-MJ)
Techniques to Keep Lessons Engaging	Interactive learning methods, storytelling, and visual aids. (T-IF, T-IA, KS-BY, T-IK, T-BD)	Group activities, inquiry-based learning, and digital tools. (T-MR, MS-A)	Active learning strategies, hands-on experiments, and peer collaboration. (T-MSN, T-MA)	Project-based learning, community engagement, and gamification (T-MD, T-MJA, T-MJ, T, MSD)
Evaluation of Lesson Effectiveness	Teacher reflections, student feedback, and periodic assessments. (KS-BY, T-IK, T-BD)	Formal evaluations through quizzes, assessments, and observation. (T-MR, MS-A)	Continuous assessment with teacher-student discussions. (T-MSN, T-MA)	Self-assessment, peer feedback, and real-world application projects. (T-MJ, T, MSD)

The analysis of lesson scheduling across Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, and the Philippines highlights distinct approaches in structuring lessons, balancing flexibility, and maintaining student engagement. Indonesia and Malaysia follow a structured yet adaptable approach, ensuring that lessons align with national curriculum guidelines while allowing minor modifications based on student responses. In contrast, Thailand adheres to a stricter syllabus structure, limiting teacher autonomy in adjusting lesson plans. The Philippines adopts the most flexible model, encouraging teachers to tailor lesson pacing and content according to student needs and community-based learning experiences.

Regarding break and transition management, Indonesia and Malaysia implement fixed break times to maintain a consistent learning rhythm, while Thailand incorporates mindfulness activities during transitions. The Philippines offers dynamic break schedules, allowing teachers to adjust based on classroom energy levels. The use of engaging lesson techniques varies, with Indonesia relying on storytelling and visual aids, Malaysia emphasizing digital tools, Thailand incorporating hands-on experiments, and the Philippines promoting project-based learning. These differences underscore how each country balances structured education with student-centered approaches to enhance learning outcomes.

Comparative Overview of Student Learning Processes in Primary Schools

The student learning process is a critical aspect of education that determines how students acquire, process, and retain knowledge. Different countries employ varied teaching methods, learning environments, and student engagement techniques to optimize the learning experience. In Southeast Asia, educational approaches are influenced by cultural values, government policies, and the integration of modern learning strategies. This study examines the student learning processes in Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, and the Philippines based on teacher interviews. The analysis covers learning styles, student engagement techniques, teacher roles, and the impact of technology in shaping student learning. Understanding these differences can help educators refine their teaching strategies to enhance student comprehension and academic performance.

Table 4. Comparative Overview of Student Learning Processes in Primary Schools

Aspect	Indonesia	Malaysia	Thailand	Philippines
Dominant Learning Styles	Visual and auditory learning, supported by storytelling and group discussions. (T-IA, T-IF, T-BD, T-BA)	Inquiry-based learning, with a focus on experimentation and STEM activities. (T-MR, MS-A)	Kinesthetic and experiential learning through hands-on activities. (T-MSN, T-MA)	Collaborative and problem-solving-based learning. (T-MD, T-MJA, T-MJ, T-MSD)
Student Engagement Techniques	Interactive storytelling, role-playing, and group discussions. (KS-MI, KS-BY, T-IK)	Small-group activities, hands-on experiments, and peer collaboration. (T-MR, MS-A)	Project-based learning, field trips, and community involvement. (T-MSN, T-MA)	Gamification, interactive learning apps, and real-life problem-solving. (MJA, T-MJ, T-MSD)
Role of Teachers in Learning	Facilitators who encourage independent thinking and creativity. (KS-BY, T-IK, T-BA)	Guides who emphasize structured learning with clear objectives. (T-MR, MS-A)	Mentors who focus on experiential and culture-based learning. (T-MSN, T-MA)	Coaches who promote student-led learning and peer collaboration. (T-MD, T-MJA, T-MJ)

Use of Technology in Learning	Limited in rural areas, more developed in urban schools through digital platforms. (IF, T-BD, T-BA)	Integrated into learning, including smart classrooms and digital resources. (MS-A)	Emerging use of educational technology, mainly for supplementary learning. (T-MA)	High adoption of digital learning tools, especially for collaborative projects. (T-MJA, T-MJ, T-MSD)
Assessment Methods	Combination of written exams, oral presentations, and group projects. (IF, T-BD, T-BA)	Standardized testing with continuous formative assessments. (T-MR, MS-A)	Performance-based assessment, including student portfolios. (T-MSN, T-MA)	Self-assessment, peer review, and real-world application projects. (T-MJA, T-MJ, T-MSD)
Challenges in Student Learning	Variation in student learning pace and engagement levels. (KS-MI, KS-BY, T-IK)	Balancing traditional and modern teaching approaches. (T-MR, MS-A)	Ensuring student motivation and practical application of knowledge. (T-MSN, T-MA)	Managing diverse student backgrounds and access to resources. (T-MJA, T-MJ, T-MD)

The analysis of student learning processes across Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, and the Philippines highlights different pedagogical approaches in primary education. Indonesia and Malaysia place a strong emphasis on structured learning with a blend of independent thinking, using storytelling, group discussions, and hands-on activities to engage students. Meanwhile, Thailand and the Philippines focus on experiential and problem-solving-based learning, utilizing project-based tasks, gamification, and digital tools to foster student engagement. While Malaysia and the Philippines have integrated more advanced educational technology, Indonesia and Thailand still face disparities in digital adoption, particularly in rural areas.

Regarding student assessment methods, Indonesia and Thailand adopt a mixed approach, combining written tests, oral presentations, and performance-based evaluations. Malaysia follows a structured model with standardized assessments, whereas the Philippines leans towards self-assessment and peer review, emphasizing real-world applications of learning. The key challenges faced by all countries include variations in student learning pace, balancing traditional and modern teaching methods, and ensuring equal access to educational resources. Addressing these challenges through more inclusive teaching strategies, technology integration, and differentiated learning approaches can help enhance the overall student learning experience in Southeast Asia.

Comparative Overview of Overall Impressions of Primary School Education

The overall impression of primary school education provides a holistic view of how teachers perceive their teaching experiences, student learning outcomes, and the effectiveness of education policies. In Southeast Asia, education systems are shaped by a combination of government regulations, cultural values, and technological advancements. Teachers play a crucial role in assessing the strengths and challenges of the system, offering valuable insights into how education can be improved.

This study presents the overall impressions of teachers from Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, and the Philippines regarding their education systems. Through teacher interviews, we examine their perspectives on teaching satisfaction, student performance, policy effectiveness, and key areas for improvement. These insights can help policymakers and educators enhance primary education to better support students and teachers alike.

Table 5. Comparative Overview of Overall Impressions of Primary School Education

Aspect	Indonesia	Malaysia	Thailand	Philippines
Satisfaction with the Education System	Generally satisfied but concerned about curriculum overload and assessment pressure. (T-IK, KS-BY, T-BI, KS-MI)	Positive, with appreciation for structured curriculum and STEM integration. (T-MR, M-SA)	Mixed opinions, with concerns over standardized testing and rigid syllabus. (T-MA)	Satisfied but sees a need for more student-centered approaches. (T-MJ, T-MSD, T-MJ)
Perceived Student Performance	Strong in theoretical knowledge but needs improvement in critical thinking. (T-BA, T-BD, T-IF, T-IA)	Good academic performance but requires better problem-solving skills. (T-MR, M-SA)	High discipline but lacks creativity in classroom discussions. (T-MA, T-MSN)	Engaged students, but disparities in learning resources affect outcomes. (T-MJA, T-MSD, T-MD)
Effectiveness of Government Policies	Policies are well-intended but implementation faces challenges, especially in rural areas. (KS-BY, T-BI, KS-MI)	Strong government support for education, but teacher workload remains high. (T-MR, M-SA)	Policies focus on discipline but limit teacher flexibility in lesson planning. (T-MA, T-MSN)	Government initiatives are promising, but execution varies by region. (T-MJA, T-MSD, T-MD)
Challenges Faced by Teachers	Heavy administrative workload, large class sizes, and lack of teaching resources. (T-IF, T-BD, KS-BY, KS-MI)	Pressure to meet national education targets while maintaining student engagement. (T-MR, M-SA)	Difficulty in adapting standardized policies to diverse student needs. (T-MA, T-MSN)	Resource gaps between urban and rural schools, affecting teaching quality. (T-MSDN, T-MJ, T-MJA)
Areas for Improvement	More teacher training, reduced curriculum load, and better digital integration. (T-IK, KS-BY, T-BA, T-IF)	More flexibility in lesson planning and integration of 21st-century skills. (T-MR, M-SA)	Reform in assessment methods and more creativity-driven curricula. (T-MA, T-MSN)	Increased government funding for schools and professional development programs. (T-MJA, T-MD, T-MSDN)

The overall impressions of primary education in Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, and the Philippines reveal a mix of satisfaction and concerns regarding curriculum structure, teaching challenges, and policy effectiveness. Indonesian and Thai teachers express concerns about curriculum rigidity, with Indonesia facing assessment pressure and Thailand struggling with standardized testing methods. Malaysian teachers appreciate the structured curriculum but feel burdened by high workloads, while Filipino teachers highlight disparities in learning resources that affect student outcomes.

Regarding student performance, all countries agree that students demonstrate strong academic knowledge, but critical thinking, problem-solving, and creativity need further development. Government policies, while supportive, face challenges in implementation, particularly in rural areas with limited resources. Teachers across all four countries identify teacher training, curriculum reform, and increased flexibility in lesson planning as key areas for improvement. Strengthening professional development programs, reducing administrative burdens, and enhancing access to modern teaching resources can significantly improve primary education systems in Southeast Asia.

DISCUSSION

Based on findings with teachers from Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, and the Philippines, this research reveals a range of perspectives on classroom management, lesson planning, student learning processes, and overall impressions of primary education in Southeast Asia. Each country demonstrates a unique approach to managing classrooms, implementing learning methods, and adapting educational policies to meet students' needs and teachers' challenges. Differences in assessment systems, use of technology, and curriculum flexibility are also key factors influencing learning effectiveness in each country. To provide a clearer explanation, the results of this study are explained as follows:

Comparative Overview of Classroom Management in Primary Schools

An analysis of classroom management in Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, and the Philippines reveals significant differences in the way student behavior is regulated, rules are set, and conflicts are resolved. Indonesia and the Philippines use a democratic approach in which students are involved in setting classroom rules to increase their sense of responsibility and involvement. In contrast, Thailand emphasizes the authoritative approach, with rules set by the school administration. Malaysia falls between these two approaches, balancing student involvement in decision making with a structured discipline system. An earlier study by (Krauss et al., 2024) confirmed that classrooms with clear rules and active student participation tend to have more positive learning environments, supporting the effectiveness of the methods used in Indonesia and Malaysia.

In conflict resolution, Indonesia and the Philippines rely on open dialogue and mediation between students, while Malaysia uses a reflective approach in which the teacher acts as a facilitator to help students understand the consequences of their actions. Thailand, on the other hand, uses stricter disciplinary measures that often involve parental intervention to resolve conflicts (Arega, 2023). Previous research by (Acosta et al., 2019) showed that restorative strategies in conflict resolution can reduce the incidence of negative behavior in schools and improve students' social relationships, consistent with the methods implemented in Indonesia and the Philippines.

Despite the variety of strategies implemented, all four countries face similar challenges, such as the diversity of student behavior, the consistency of rule application, and the balance between discipline and student freedom. Therefore, the adoption of restorative strategies, a combination of balanced discipline approaches, and increased student involvement in classroom management are recommended solutions (Gregory et al., 2021). The results of this study support the findings of (Lakkala et al., 2021) that inclusive and collaborative learning environments contribute to improved academic achievement and student well-being, suggesting the importance of a more flexible and participatory approach to classroom management in Southeast Asia.

Comparative Overview of Lesson Scheduling in Primary Schools

Lesson planning in Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, and the Philippines shows variation in lesson structure, flexibility in making schedule adjustments, and strategies for maintaining student engagement. Indonesia and Malaysia adopt a structured yet adaptive approach, where schedules are organized according to national curriculum guidelines, but teachers have room to make minor modifications according to student needs. Thailand, on the other hand, adopts a more rigid schedule structure that limits teachers' autonomy to adapt schedules to ensure curriculum uniformity across schools. The Philippines has the most flexible model, allowing teachers to adjust the pace and content of learning based on student needs and community-based learning experiences (Jingyi & De Dios, 2024). This finding is consistent with research by (El-Sabagh, 2021) which emphasizes that a flexible curriculum that is responsive to students' needs can improve conceptual understanding and active engagement in learning.

Approaches to managing breaks and transitions between lessons also vary across countries. Indonesia and Malaysia set fixed breaks to maintain a consistent learning rhythm, while Thailand integrates mindfulness activities during transitions between subjects to help students manage stress and improve concentration. The Philippines uses a more dynamic system where teachers can adjust recess schedules based on students' energy levels in the classroom. This approach reflects the findings of (Singh et al., 2022) that flexible transition management can improve student concentration and information retention.

The techniques used to keep students engaged also varied, reflecting each country's pedagogical approach. Indonesia relies on storytelling techniques and visual aids, Malaysia uses digital technology, Thailand uses hands-on experimentation and experiential activities, while the Philippines emphasizes project-based learning and collaboration. This diversity shows that each country adapts teaching methods to balance structured education with student-centered approaches. This finding supports the study by (Li et al., 2019) which shows that varied and experiential learning strategies improve students' understanding and engagement in the learning process. Therefore, the adoption of more flexible scheduling models as well as the integration of interactive learning methods can improve the effectiveness of education in the Southeast Asian region.

Comparative Overview of Student Learning Processes in Primary Schools

Students' learning processes in Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, and the Philippines show differences in the pedagogical approaches used at the basic education level. Indonesia and Malaysia emphasize structured learning, but still encourage independent thinking through various methods such as storytelling, group discussions, and hands-on activities to increase student engagement. This approach is consistent with (Chuang, 2021) findings on social-constructivist learning, which emphasizes that social interaction and hands-on experience play an important role in students' cognitive development. In contrast, Thailand and the Philippines focus more on experiential learning and problem solving, where students are encouraged to engage in collaborative projects, gamification, and the use of digital tools to increase their engagement and motivation in learning. This approach supports (Dwyer & Walsh, 2020) theory that active and exploratory learning enhances students' conceptual understanding and critical thinking skills.

In terms of technology integration in learning, Malaysia and the Philippines have adopted more advanced educational technologies, including the use of smart classrooms, online learning platforms, and artificial intelligence (AI)-based applications to enhance students' learning experience. Meanwhile, Indonesia and Thailand still face gaps in technology adoption, especially in rural areas with limited infrastructure and access to digital resources. This is in line with the (Lembani et al., 2020) which shows that disparities in technology access can affect the quality of learning as well as the effectiveness of implementing digital methods in education. Therefore, investment in technology infrastructure development as well as training for educators are key factors to improve the effectiveness of digital learning in the region.

In terms of assessment methods, Indonesia and Thailand use a blended approach that combines written exams, oral presentations, and performance-based assessments to assess students' understanding and skills. In contrast, Malaysia relies on a more structured and standards-based assessment system, while the Philippines places more emphasis on formative assessments, such as self-assessment and peer review, with a focus on real-world applications of learning. These variations in assessment methods reflect each country's attempt to strike a balance between formal academic assessment and a more authentic, experiential approach (Korucu-Kıř, 2021). However, common challenges include differences in the pace at which students learn, difficulties in balancing traditional and modern learning methods, and inequalities in access to educational resources (Rapanta et al., 2021). To overcome these challenges, more inclusive teaching approaches, greater integration of technology, and differentiated learning approaches are solutions that need to be implemented to improve the quality and effectiveness of student learning in Southeast Asia.

Comparative Overview of Overall Impressions of Primary School Education

Overall impressions of basic education in Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, and the Philippines reflect a combination of satisfaction and concern about curriculum structure, teaching challenges, and the effectiveness of education policies. Teachers in Indonesia and Thailand highlighted the rigidity of the curriculum, with Indonesia facing high pressure in exam-based assessment, while Thailand is still grappling with a standardized testing system that lacks flexibility to accommodate students' learning needs. On the other hand, teachers in Malaysia are generally satisfied with the systematic structure of the curriculum, but they feel a heavy workload due to administrative demands and strict academic targets. The Philippines faces a different challenge, where gaps in the availability of educational resources, especially in rural areas, are a major obstacle to achieving equitable learning outcomes. This is in line with (Madani, 2019) research that access to quality resources is a key factor in improving the effectiveness of education systems in developing countries.

In terms of student performance, the four countries agreed that students demonstrate good academic understanding, but need to be strengthened in critical thinking, problem solving and creativity. The education model, which still focuses on test scores and memorization of concepts, is a challenge to developing more applicable 21st century skills. This is reinforced by (Portuguez Castro & Gómez Zermeño, 2020) study, which asserts that education systems that emphasize innovation and flexibility in the curriculum are more effective in preparing students for global challenges. Although government policies in each country have provided support for improving the quality of education, challenges in policy implementation (Hudson et al., 2019), especially in resource-limited regions, remain a major obstacle affecting the quality of teaching and student learning outcomes.

Improving the quality of basic education in Southeast Asia will require strategic policies that focus on strengthening professional development programs for teachers, making curriculum reforms more flexible, and reducing administrative burdens that impede teaching effectiveness. In addition, increased access to modern educational resources, including digital learning technologies, will help create more dynamic and inclusive learning experiences. Research by (Philipsen et al., 2019) shows that improving teacher quality through ongoing professional development can significantly improve student learning outcomes, making investments in teacher training and education policy reforms critical to building basic education systems that are more adaptable and responsive to students' needs in Southeast Asia.

CONCLUSION

This study analyzes classroom management, lesson planning, student learning processes, and overall impressions of primary education in Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, and the Philippines, highlighting the different approaches in each country's education system. The results show that Indonesia and the Philippines tend to take a democratic approach, while Thailand is more authoritative and Malaysia falls somewhere in between with a balance between student engagement and structured discipline. In terms of scheduling learning, Malaysia and Indonesia follow a more planned yet flexible structure, while Thailand is stricter and the Philippines uses the most dynamic system. In addition, differences in learning and assessment methods show that Indonesia and Thailand combine examination and project-based assessment, Malaysia relies more on formal standards, while the Philippines emphasizes experiential assessment and self-reflection. Despite the differences in approaches, all countries face similar challenges, such as limited resources, different learning paces of students, and gaps in access to educational technology. Therefore, this study recommends the integration of more flexible learning strategies, improved teacher training, and more adaptive curriculum reforms to create a more inclusive and responsive basic education system to the needs of students in Southeast Asia.

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