

# Teachers' Perspective on Student's Right to Participation in Classroom Management

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<https://doi.org/10.24191/ajue.v17i1.12602>

*Received: 29 December 2020*

*Accepted: 8 February 2021*

*Date Published Online: 8 March 2021*

*Published: 8 March 2021*

**Abstract:** The study aimed at exploring the teachers' perspective on the right of the child to participate in the seating arrangement and how the teachers resolved when values and norms were in conflict. The data were collected through questionnaires by a convenience sampling technique from seven regencies in Central Java and East Java, Indonesia. The participants of the research were teachers at Junior High Schools and Senior High Schools. The results of the study showed the following findings. Firstly, 81% of the teachers stated that the students have the right to choose their own seats. However, half of the teachers excluded the rights of the students to choose with whom they sat. Secondly, practices in different schools, especially private and Islamic schools, demonstrated that religious norms played such a significant role in the school and classroom management. It indicates that the values derived from the legal sources were subject to the aim of complying with the religious norms.

**Keywords:** Child right to participation, Classroom management, Seating arrangement, Teachers' perspective.

## 1. Introduction

Despite the claims that the schools had implemented the children's rights to participation in education, either at the classroom or the school level, school teachers had diverse views about children's rights in education. Children's right in education can be interpreted and implemented in different ways by different school communities (MacAllister & Riddell, 2019; Farzana, Pero & Othman, 2020). The miscellaneous views of teachers about children's rights implied the disparity between what was conveyed in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and what was enacted in national contexts of the countries ratifying the convention and its implementation at various levels. At the national level, the disparity has resulted from weak enforcement (Lundy, 2012) and the failure of the state in taking the perspective of the children's rights into the classroom (Urinboyev, Wickenberg & Leo, 2016). At the institutional level, the disparity was due to the conservative school culture in which the teachers had a limited role as agents of change (Jerome, 2016).

The various views of teachers on the rights of the child implied the conflict they encountered between the values conveyed in the CRC and the social-cultural norms by which their perceptions had been shaped (Urinboyev et al., 2016; Tadesse, Manathunga & Gillies, 2020). Studies in Italy, Scotland and north of England showed that one of the most problematic challenges in implementing the rights of

the child was how to exercise the right of the child to be heard (Bosisio, 2012; Cairns, Byrne, Davis, Johnson & Konstantoni, 2018). The problem in exercising the rights of the child to be heard was most noted in school and classroom management where school principals and teachers assumed, they were granted the authority to tell rather than listen to the students (Hoon, Nasaruddin & Singh, 2017).

On the one hand, classroom environment not only contributed to the intensity of academic engagement and reduced the disturbing behavior of the students (Guardino & Fullerton, 2010), but improved the student learning, achievement and motivation as well (Cheryan, Ziegler, Pault & Meltzoff, 2014). On the other hand, teachers had not considered students sufficiently in classroom management as teachers, especially found in Asian and African schools, governed the classroom based on their own claim of authority. This implied that local/national culture had a significant role in CRC implementation.

Just as what happened in other Asian and African countries, implementing CRC in Indonesia encountered similar tensions. On the one hand, Indonesia has ratified the CRC and enacted Child Protection Law (UU 32/2002) to ensure the implementation of the CRC. However, the country has a strong cultural value derived from religions, national philosophy (*Pancasila*), as well as local cultures that represent essential sources of values on the other hand. So, it is problematic exercising the rights of the child in the communities where social relations between community members, let alone teacher-student, is hierarchical as found in such a culture as Javanese, one of the dominant cultures in Indonesia. In such contexts where a child is often treated as a human-becoming rather than a full human-being, teachers may find tensions between individuals and the society about what they perceive to be good or not good.

The purpose of the current study was to investigate how teachers perceived the students' right to participation in classroom management, especially whether they accommodated the students' right to choose their own seats and with whom to sit in the classroom. This study also depicted how the teachers resolved the conflict between children's right to participation in education and the increasingly dominant interpretation of religious norms.

Psychological studies distinguished two types of norms, namely descriptive norms and injunctive norms. Descriptive norms referred to the awareness that directed one's behavior, while injunctive norms denoted the perceptions of acceptability by others (Cialdini, Kallgren & Reno, 1991). Instead of using the concept of norms, Haidt (2008) employed the notion of morality that was differentiated into individualizing morality to mean the privileges of individuals to have their preferences and binding morality to denote the consideration of justice and fairness to others. Similarly, Smith distinguished cultural values from cultural norms based on the level of whether individual or collective (Smith, 2017). Despite the various notions of values that guided human's behavior, it was generally agreed that collective behavior was determined by their shared context rather than that of the individual (Morris, Hong, Yi, Chiu, Yue & Liu, 2015).

### 1.1 Secondary schools in the Indonesian system of education

In the Indonesian system of education, secondary schools were junior high school (Grade 7-9) and senior high schools (grade 10-12). In terms of official authority, secondary schools (junior and senior high schools) were distinguished into two groups, namely schools under the ministry of education and culture and those under the ministry of religious affairs. Both state and private institutions offered public schools and Islamic schools at the junior level, while at senior level they offered vocational in addition to public and Islamic schools. The public schools were called *Sekolah Menengah Pertama* (junior high school) at junior level and *Sekolah Menengah Atas* (senior high school) at senior level. Islamic secondary schools were *Madrasah Tsanawiyah* (junior high school) and *Madrasah Aliyah* (senior high school). The vocational schools were known as *Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan* (vocational high school). The public and vocational schools were under the authority of the ministry of education and culture, whereas the Islamic schools were administered by the ministry of religious affairs.

Table 1 demonstrated that private schools played a significant role in the Indonesian system of education. The number of private-public schools was about as many as the state-owned schools, and the number of private vocational schools were three times higher than state vocational schools.

However, the number of private Islamic schools was far higher than that of the state (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2019; Kementerian Agama RI, 2013).

**Table 1.** Percentage of state and private Islamic secondary schools

| SCHOOL LEVELS      | STATE-OWNED |            |         | PRIVATE OWNED |            |         |
|--------------------|-------------|------------|---------|---------------|------------|---------|
|                    | Public      | Vocational | Islamic | Public        | Vocational | Islamic |
| Senior High School | 49.77%      | 25,44%     | 9.37%   | 50.23%        | 74,56%     | 90.63%  |
| Junior High School | 59.00%      | -          | 8.27%   | 41%           | -          | 91.73%  |

(Source: Central Bureau of Statistics & Ministry of Religious Affairs, 2018)

## 1.2 Seating arrangement

The seating arrangement is considered as an important aspect in classroom environments. Whether in terms of shape, comfort, distance, or position, seating arrangement plays a great role in the learning process, motivation and performance. In general, the seating arrangement was correlated with the level of student participation (McCorskey & McVetta, 1978; Sueb, Hashim, Hashim & Izam, 2020). When the students felt comfortable with where they sat, they were more likely to participate in the discussion (Woodson, 2013). The shape of seating arrangements, whether in rows or semicircles, contributed to the student level of participation. Semicircles seating arrangement encouraged students to ask questions in the learning processes (Marx, Fuhrer & Hartig, 1999).

The distance of the seat between one student and the other and between the students and the teacher became a determining factor in successful learning. Students who sat at the front rows paid attention to the lesson more and had a higher level of participation (Ikram, 2010) and motivation (Stringer, 2014) than those sitting at the back rows. Seating arrangement also represents a spatial meaning of relation (Leventhal et al., 1978), a symbol of educability (Kasanen, Rätty & Snellman, 2001). The feeling of closeness in seating arrangements also contributed to the feeling of confidence (Dowley, 2012; Quennerstedt & Quennerstedt, 2014) and the feeling of confidence affected the academic development of the students (Gremmen, Berg, Van Den, Steglich, Veenstra & Kornelis, 2018).

One problematic issue dealing with seating arrangement is whether students have the right to choose their own seats in terms of where to sit and with whom to sit, namely whether boys should sit with boys and girls with girls or boys and girls may sit at the same table. On the one hand, Bradd & Wheldhall (2010) discovered that mixed-sex seating arrangement resulted in the highest levels of student engagement in accomplishing assignments and the lowest levels of student disruptive behaviour (Bradd & Wheldhall, 2010). This type of seating, however, was not popular among teachers, especially in schools where sex was a sensitive issue, on the other hand.

## 2. Research Method

This study was an explorative study portraying how the right of the children in schools was implemented. The data were collected through open questionnaires distributed to various secondary schools from seven regencies in Java, Indonesia, that included state junior high schools (*SMP Negeri*), private junior high schools (*SMP swasta*), state Islamic junior high schools (*MTs Negeri*), private Islamic junior high schools (*MTs swasta*), state senior high schools (*SMA Negeri*), and state vocational schools (*SMK Negeri*). The questionnaires, as well as the answers, were written in the Indonesian language, which was then translated into English. The respondents were 42 teachers from the schools selected by means of convenience sampling (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). As many as 21 teachers were from state schools, and the other 21 were from private schools.

The questionnaires contained 13 points of questions that could be classified into six categories, namely: (1) types of student right in schools, (2) student right to participation in the seating arrangement, (3) student right to participation in classroom management, (4) student right to the participation teaching-learning process, (5) student right to participation in school management. This article,

however, focuses only on the first three questions, namely the kinds of student rights exercised in schools and student rights to choose their seats in the class.

### 3. Results and Discussion

#### 3.1 Children's right to participation in school

The right of the child in schools that the teachers stated in their answers to question number 2 and 3 in the questionnaire was basically normative and mostly dealing with issues related to those stated in Law 23/2012 about the child protection, especially Article 9, Paragraph 1, namely the right to get education and instruction for personal and intellectual development in accordance with the interests and talents. In practice, the right of the child in schools was implemented into: (a) the right to get religious education in accordance with the respective religion they practice, (b) the right to get the character education, (c) the right to get the educational service in accordance with the aptitude, interest, and ability, (d) the right to get equal treatment in the learning, (e) the right to get guidance and counseling, (f) the right to get fair treatment, (g) the right to get protection, (h) the right to make use of the school facility (the library, laboratory, computer, sport and art equipment), (i) the right to express ideas, oral or written (j) the right to the financial support, (k) the right to organization, (l) the right to religious service, (m) the right to extracurricular activities, (n) the right to health service, (o) the right to get special services for the diffable, (p) the right to complaint, (q) the right to scholarship, (r) the right to make friends, (s) the right to creativity, (t) the right to religious practice.

None of the teachers, however, mentioned anything about the right of the child to participate in school and classroom management. The teachers recognized children's right to participation in education but not in school and classroom management as they belonged to the authority of the principals and teachers instead. The teachers did not show any slight indication that students, for example, had the right to participate in school management, such as strategic decision-making processes or teachers' performance evaluations.

#### 3.2 Children's rights to choose their own seats

As many as 81% of the teachers confirmed that students had the right to choose their own seats in the classroom while 19% others stated that students did not have the right to choose their own seat and that the teachers arranged the seating for them instead.

**Table 2.** Teachers' perspective on student right to choose their seats

| Perspective on student right to choose their seats | School Status |         |       |
|--|---------------|---------|-------|
|  | State         | Private | Total |
| Yes  | 45%           | 36%     | 81%   |
| No   | 5%            | 14%     | 19%   |
| Total  | 50%           | 50%     | 100%  |

The variations of the teachers' stance together with the reasons underlying the convictions were as follows:

- **D02:** Students have the right to choose their own seats. That is because the comfort of each student is different. Some are more comfortable sitting in the front, and others are more comfortable sitting in the back, etc. Because basically, comfort will determine the student learning outcomes.
- **D03:** Students have the right to choose a seat, but for their seats, they usually make a collective agreement in one class so that each child can feel sitting in front, back or centre and there are some that remain in the same seats depending on the class agreement.

- **D06:** Learners are given the freedom to determine their own seats during class as long as the class is orderly and conducive. This is done to provide a sense of comfort for children in receiving lessons and keep the class orderly.
- **D07:** Learners have the right to choose their own seats because students want to feel how they interact with friends who have different seating positions. Students want to feel how they sit in front, centre and back so that all can feel and respect their seating position.
- **D09:** Students have the right to choose their own seats (on which side, in pairs with whom) so they can feel comfortable and confident. This is to maintain their enthusiasm.
- **D10:** learners have the right to choose a seat in accordance with their wishes as long as it does not interfere with learning order. It is hoped that they will have learning experiences.
- **D12:** Students have the right to choose their own seat (which side, partner with whom) so they can feel comfortable and confident. This affects their enthusiasm for activities at school. With the exception of students who cannot see far must be placed in the front row.
- **D13:** They can choose their own seats which side, partner with whom so they can feel comfortable in following the teaching and learning activities.
- **D15:** Yes, because children have the right to get comfort in class and to adjust to the child's condition (for example, children who have visual impairment choose to sit in the front).
- **D20:** learners have the right to choose their own seats because by choosing a seat, the learners feel safe, comfortable in receiving lessons so they can receive lessons to the maximum.
- **D23:** Students have the right to choose their own seats (which side, partner with whom) so that students can feel comfortable and confident when sitting with other students who are selected. This right will affect their achievements, for example, when teachers give assignments in pairs/pair with a peer.
- **D24:** In the classroom, students have the right to choose alternately seating and moving classrooms. Because by changing seats, on the side/left/right side, centre, back and front, even moving class, students can enjoy a better view, eyes are not damaged, and practice togetherness in democracy and deliberation in organizational, group or community life.

The preceding explanations demonstrated that the teachers recognized the rights of the students to choose their seating position depending on their preference and minute of arrival. The teachers asserted that the right to the seating position was meant to give the comfortable setting for learning (D02, D06, D09, D12, D13, D15, D20, D23, D29, D30, D34, D37, D38, D42), to give the feeling of confidence in learning (D09, D12, D23), to maintain enthusiasm in learning (D09, D12), to meet the need of individual's health (D12, D15, D24, D32, D41), to get a conducive setting (D06), to give a sense of learning experience (D10), to give a sense of equality (D03), to experience different seating positions (D07), to respect other's seating positions (D07), to give a sense of safety (D20), to support achievement (D23), to give enjoyment in learning (D24) and to facilitate the internalization of democratic values (D24).

The other teachers (15%) denied the right of the students to choose their seating position. They argued that seating arrangement belonged to the authority of the teachers and that students could not choose their own seats because seating position is part of the classroom management to ensure good learning processes. The arguments used for denying the right were as follows:

- **D01:** The right of the students to choose their seats is limited. This is done to support the course of the learning process in class. Learning will be able to run well if class management can be arranged appropriately. One of them is by arranging the seating of the students. The teacher has his own structuring guidelines, namely: the front row for the students of small body posture (male/female) and those who cannot see writing, pictures or graphics from some distance away; the middle row for those with moderate posture; and the back row for those with bigger posture...
- **D14:** In the classroom, the homeroom teacher determines the seat between students and students using the right-left or front-back models. This mode setting is done so that the teacher is easy in class management when learning ...

- **D21:** The student seats are rolled. This is to provide a sense of fairness so that each student can feel the same.
- **D35:** The teacher prepares the seat position. The teacher randomizes the position so that each student has the opportunity to sit anywhere and close to anyone.

Those teachers argued that the students should not decide where to sit by themselves, but the teachers arranged the seating position instead. The authority of the teachers was needed to ensure the course of the learning process in class (D01), to make it easier for the teachers to manage the classrooms during the teaching-learning process (D14), and to provide a sense of fairness and equality (D21, D35). The teachers arranged the seating position based on certain patterns, such as bi-weekly, weekly, or daily shift. In the bi-weekly shift pattern, the students moved to the other rows after sitting at the same rows for two weeks. They moved from the first row to the second, from the second to the third, from the third to the fourth etc. until finally the last row to the first (D01). In the weekly shift pattern, each student took a lottery on every Monday morning (D19). The numbers that came out of the lottery were the seat numbers where they were supposed to sit. In the daily shift pattern, each student would sit at a different seat every day by moving one seat, either to the right or to the left corresponding to the row. The periodical shift was necessary in order to prevent boredom (D01), ensure the comfort in learning (D02), to exercise the sight and to let each student feel the sensation of sitting in all positions, especially the front rows (D25).

When the teachers stated that the students had the right to choose the seating position, they were actually concerned in the spatial dimension of the seating arrangement whether the students preferred to sit in the front or back rows, or whether on the right or left wings. Previous studies demonstrated that seating arrangement became an important aspect of classroom management and was potential to affect the student achievement and performance (Cheryan et al., 2014; Gremmen, Berg, Segers, & Cillessen, 2016). However, the seating location and seating type did not affect student performance (Meeks et al., 2013) significantly.

### 3.3 Same-Sex vs. Mixed Sex Seating Arrangement

When the sex issue in the seating arrangement was raised, 52% of the teachers affirmed that the students could choose with whom to sit disregarding the sex. The other 48% opposed the mixed-sex seating arrangement. The percentage of the teachers stating that students had the rights to choose their own seats dropped in both state and private schools.

**Table 3.** Teachers' perspective on student right to choose mixed-sex seating by school status

| Perspective on student right to choose mixed-sex seating | School Status |         | TOTAL |
|--|---------------|---------|-------|
|  | State         | Private |       |
| Yes  | 33%           | 19%     | 52%   |
| No   | 17%           | 31%     | 48%   |
| TOTAL  | 50%           | 50%     | 100%  |

The teachers that recognized the right of the students to choose whom they would sit with, disregarding the sex of the sitting mate, were as follows:

- **D08:** Allowed, because children are free to choose suitable friends and there is no separation between male and female students in one class.
- **D09:** Because our school is a public school where students consist of male and female, there is no prohibition for them to sit side by side with the opposite sex (at the same table). Of course, under the supervision of teachers, especially at teaching and learning hours.
- **D10:** It's okay, as long as it doesn't interfere with the training process.

- **D12:** Our school is a public school, so there is no prohibition for them to sit side by side with the opposite sex. But the teacher must always watch over them during the learning process.
- **D13:** The principle is that there is no prohibition for them to sit side by side with the opposite sex (at the same table) during the process of teaching and learning activities while maintaining the norms of decency and discipline in the school.
- **D15:** Not a problem, as long as the child concerned is motivated to learn and get comfortable.
- **D23:** In general, classes, where the school places male and female students in one class, choosing to sit with students/friends of the opposite sex, is allowed in order to apply gender roles and equality, in the classroom when the teacher gives the task of group discussion the students are not grouped by gender. In daily life outside the school, men and women carry out several activities together, for example, in their organizations, they will foster mutual communication so that the conditions at school can be used as learning or experiences to be able to respect each other and work together.
- **D24:** Students at my school sit freely to choose friends, male with female, female with female, or male with male, so they can live understanding each other's character/personality, boys and girls can respect, esteem and complement each other, as well as perfect, even in group work, in work or practice, e.g., food, hospitality, beauty and fashion.
- **D42:** The students may sit with whomever they want to sit because they need to learn and respect their friends from the opposite sex.

The above explication demonstrated that the teachers who accepted mixed-sex seating arrangement were based on the students' freedom (D08, D09, D13, D24), students' right to education in public schools (D09, D12, D24), students' comfort (D15), gender roles and equality (D23), and mutual respect (D24, D42).

The other half of the teachers (48%), however, perceived that the right to seating position did not include the opposite sex sitting mate. These teachers argued that the seating position should comply with the same-sex grouping principle.

- **D01:** Male students usually sit side by side with male and male students or vice versa (female and female). Because junior high school students with a range of ages 13 to 15 years, on average they are of puberty and should not sit in pairs. Moreover, students have begun to show interest in the opposite sex, and if they are seated side by side there are considerations that will interfere with a focus in learning.
- **D02:** Male students in our school are not allowed to sit side by side with the opposite sex. This is because our school is dormitory-based, so we need to keep a distance between male and female. In addition, if this happens, it may hamper the socializing attitudes among the students of the same sex.
- **D03:** Male students always sit with the male; if they want to sit with a female then this is not permitted except during exams conducted at school.
- **D04:** If there are male students who want to sit side by side with female students, it is not permissible to prevent immoral acts in the classroom, because students currently experience sexual maturity more quickly influenced by the content of the gadgets they see.
- **D05:** Sometimes it's allowed, sometimes it's not. It depends on the conditions of the class. So long as the interactions between the two learners (male and female) are at a reasonable stage, it is permissible. However, if it starts triggering actions that have a negative impact, they should be separated.
- **D11:** The homeroom teacher takes action by giving the understanding to choose a partner to sit but not with the opposite sex, to prevent from the lack of concentration in learning and something undesirable considering that in junior high school students are now starting to be attracted to the opposite sex.
- **D14:** This is not permitted because it has been practiced in our school for a long time. Besides, if sitting side by side with students of the opposite sex, students tend not to focus entirely on

learning activities. Sitting side by side of the opposite sex is allowed if needed in group work, during exams both midterm and final semester.

- **D16:** We do not allow it because we, our school, separate boys from girls even though in one class, in accordance with religious requirements.
- **D17:** Male students should not sit side by side with female students, because to prevent things that are not desirable.
- **D18:** Not allowed on the grounds of Islamic law. We have an intelligence team. Students who are caught dating only in social media will receive severe penalties.
- **D21:** The classroom system in our school separates boys from girls.
- **D22:** Male students are not permitted to sit side by side with female students, for religious reasons, to avoid direct contact between non-mahram male and female that are not permitted by religion.
- **D27:** Not allowed for everyday practice. Except for special things, for example, in one group there are boys and girls. Because to get children familiar with the boundaries of relationships between males and females.

The underlying reasons of the teachers to negate the right of the students to choose the mixed-sex seating were to comply with the school regulation (D03, D21, D31, D34, D35, D36, D37, D39), to comply with the religious norms (D02, D16, D18, D22, D28, D30), to prevent from immoral conduct because of the early sexual maturity (D04, D05, D17), to prevent from the distraction of the interest in the opposite sex (D02, D11, D14), and to internalize the cultural and religious norms about gender relation (27).

#### **4. Discussion**

The findings confirmed that the right of the students to seating arrangement had been responded and implemented differently in different schools. Despite the same ground to meet the best interest of the students, the teachers had a conflicting perspective about the rights of the students to choose the sitting partners. Slightly more than half of the teachers recognized the right of the students to choose with whom they would sit, but nearly half of them denied it. The teachers who recognized the right of the students to choose their sitting partners based their stance on the conviction that the right to choose the sitting partner was an integral part of the right of the child to participate in education. To these teachers, the right of the students was closely related to the ownership of the schools. As public schools were state-owned and the state assured everyone's right, including that of the students, consequently, there was no reason to hamper the right of the students to choose their seating position. Recognizing the right of the students to choose their sitting partners signified the assurance of equality and justice representing the execution of the non-discriminating policy in the classroom management.

The teachers who denied the right of the students to choose their sitting partners argued that seating arrangement was not the right of the student but the authority of the teachers. The seating arrangement was part of class management that the limitation of the students' right to have a mixed-sex seating arrangement was meant for their own benefit. As they began to reach puberty and be interested in the opposite sex, they should be guarded so that they would not get distracted in their learning activities by the newly experienced stage of life. To these teachers, mixed-sex seating arrangement was not in line with the religious teaching and a potential temptation to immoral acts. The finding suggested that to the teachers, students were not ready to encounter such temptations that might lead the children to the direction against the religious teachings. The finding confirmed the need for examining how the children's rights in education were put into practice, in which children were treated in their full status humans, not as mere human-becoming (Quennerstedt & Quennerstedt, 2014).

With regard to the issue of the mixed-sex seating arrangement, the finding indicated a conflict between the legal-political values derived from the national law as well as the convention of the rights of the child and the religious norms. Practices in different schools, especially private and Islamic schools, demonstrated that religious norms played a significant role in the school and classroom management. Despite the diverse interpretations of the sexual grouping, the finding suggested that in private and Islamic schools, the teachers opposed mixed-sex seating arrangement because they were



very much engaged in moral concerns. This was due to the increasing influence of militant religious interpretation trend adopting the more conservative, puritan, and radical perspective in the country (Hasan, 2017; Fealy, 2004; Jati, 2013; Muzakki, 2014). This finding confirmed the earlier studies (Abbas, 2003) that Muslim individuals were very much influenced by the religious norms (Biesta et al., 2015). However, the individual belief of the teachers and the institutional culture had a significant contribution to the perceptions, judgments, and actions of the teachers. This finding also confirmed the other previous study (Urinboyev et al., 2016) that in some Asian and African countries, the execution of children's rights in education was challenging as the prevailing school culture considered that the execution of children's rights as a threat to the authority of the teachers (Kireeva et al, 2019).

The teachers' perspective, especially on the seating arrangement, implied that the implementation of children's right in education had not accommodated the right of the child to be heard. It was not part of the teachers' conviction that they were required to involve the students in the seating arrangement. Both the teachers recognized that the children's right to choose the seating position and those that were denying it did not mention the necessity of hearing the students' view on the seating arrangement. This confirmed other previous studies (Strandbu, 2006; Heintz & Svenson, 2016; Smith & Haslett, 2017) about the necessity of having the children's perspective in order to exercise children's right to participation in education, including in the classroom management and seating arrangement.

## 5. Conclusion

Based on the preceding on the analysis and discussion, the study came to the following conclusions. Firstly, teachers claimed to have fulfilled children's rights to participation in the seating arrangement that constituted a significant element in classroom management. What the teachers meant with children's right to choose a seat actually referred to the spatial dimension of the seating arrangement. They were concerned much with the seating position in that the location that the students chose to sit. Their perspective on the seating arrangement did not instantaneously include sitting partner, with whom the students chose to sit as students, especially in private schools, were expected to sit with their classmates of the same sex. Secondly, children's right to choose their own seats was considered in conflict with the religious norm that male and female should sit separately. They denied children's right to choose their own seat, especially in religion-affiliated schools, either state or private, to comply with the religious norms and school regulations.

The research was an explorative study that involved such a limited number of samples in terms of both teachers and schools that it could not be generalized as the representation of secondary schools in Indonesia. Considering the vast and diverse areas, further research that involves more schools from more areas must be conducted in order to get a better picture of teachers' perspective on seating arrangement.

## 6. Acknowledgment

We thank Dr. Bodil Rasmusson (Lund University, Sweden) for the comments on the manuscript, Dr. Per Wickenberg (Lund University, Sweden) for the theoretical empowerment, and the Directorate of Research and Community Service, Ministry of Education and Culture of Republic of Indonesia for the financial support.

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