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Unequal Classroom Facilities: Implications for Student Comfort and Learning Effectiveness

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ABSTRACT

Educational facilities play an essential role in creating comfortable and effective learning environments. However, unequal distribution and inadequate maintenance of classroom facilities may create differences in students' learning experiences, particularly in terms of comfort, concentration, and instructional effectiveness. This study aims to examine classroom facility inequality, identify its implications for learning effectiveness, and explore the factors contributing to unequal facility provision. This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach involving three teachers and six students selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and documentation. Data analysis involved data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification, supported by source and technique triangulation. The findings revealed that two of the five observed classrooms were equipped with air conditioners, while the other three relied exclusively on fans. These differences were associated with variations in classroom comfort, instructional quality, student motivation, and learning time efficiency. Three contributing factors were identified: borrowed classrooms, inconsistent fan maintenance, and the absence of a formal damage-reporting system. The findings highlight the importance of equitable facility allocation, systematic maintenance, and transparent reporting mechanisms to support more comfortable, fair, and effective learning environments.

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INTRODUCTION

Educational facilities are essential to the quality and fairness of learning because they shape the conditions under which students participate, concentrate, and develop their abilities (Haidir et al., 2025; Khalid & Farid, 2025). Classrooms are not merely physical spaces; they are learning environments that influence students' comfort, motivation, interaction, and access to instructional activities.

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Equipment such as boards, projectors, air conditioners, and fans supports teaching, while buildings, classrooms, and school surroundings provide the broader infrastructure for education (Thoyibah et al., 2025; Zhang et al., 2025). When these resources are adequate and appropriately managed, teachers can organize lessons more effectively and students can engage with learning tasks under supportive conditions. Therefore, the provision of educational facilities is a matter of public importance, since the quality of the learning environment can affect educational opportunities, students' experiences, and the capacity of schools to achieve their educational responsibilities and goals.

Equitable access to appropriate classroom facilities is equally important because students within the same institution should have comparable opportunities to learn comfortably. Differences in classroom conditions may create unequal learning experiences even when students follow the same curriculum, receive instruction from teachers with similar qualifications, and are assessed against identical standards (Chen, 2024; Neut Aguayo et al., 2026). A classroom that is excessively hot or poorly ventilated can make it difficult for students to remain attentive and participate actively, particularly during periods of high temperature. This issue extends beyond physical comfort: it concerns the school's responsibility to provide an environment that enables all learners to benefit from instruction. Ensuring that facilities are distributed and maintained consistently and fairly is therefore essential to educational quality, institutional accountability, and the creation of inclusive learning conditions for every single student.

Many schools face practical challenges in providing and managing facilities consistently across classrooms. Limited budgets, differences in building conditions, maintenance priorities, procurement decisions, and growing student numbers can influence which rooms receive particular equipment and when improvements are made (Ikram & Kenayathulla, 2023; Yambal & Waykar, 2025). Consequently, facilities may be available in one classroom but absent in another, although both serve students within the same institution. This issue was observed at SMK Bina Putra Mandiri Parungpanjang during school field practice in five classrooms. Two rooms equipped with air conditioners appeared relatively calm and orderly at approximately eleven in the morning. By contrast, three rooms relying only on fans showed students using books to fan themselves, appearing sleepy, and seeming less engaged. These observations raise questions about classroom comfort and learning conditions, without establishing a direct causal effect.

Previous studies have approached educational facilities from several related perspectives. Research on facility management has examined how planning, procurement, inventory, maintenance, and disposal support the

effectiveness of teaching and learning (Jayasinghe et al., 2023; Wan Abdullah et al., 2025). Other studies have investigated relationships between the availability or quality of school facilities, students' learning outcomes, classroom comfort, and instructional effectiveness. Taken together, this literature indicates that facilities are not passive school assets: their educational value depends on their suitability, availability, and management. These studies provide a foundation for understanding why adequate facilities matter to the learning process. However, much of the existing discussion addresses facilities in general or evaluates their relationship with broad educational outcomes. Consequently, differences in access between classrooms within the same school may receive less direct attention, despite their potential significance for students' everyday learning experiences.

This study is positioned at the intersection of facility management, classroom environmental conditions, and educational equity. Rather than examining only the overall adequacy of school infrastructure or measuring the general facility effects on achievement, it focuses on unequal access to cooling equipment between classrooms in one vocational school. This narrower focus makes it possible to examine how disparities are experienced in daily lessons, what institutional or practical factors may contribute to them, and how they are understood in relation to learning effectiveness. The study also introduces an Islamic educational management perspective by considering fairness in the distribution of facilities and the responsibility to make learning easier for students (Mohammed et al., 2025; Sari & Sopandi, 2026). It therefore extends discussions from the general importance of facilities toward the specific issue of equitable classroom provision and its educational implications.

The novelty of this study lies in examining differences in classroom cooling facilities, specifically the contrast between air-conditioned rooms and rooms equipped only with fans, as an educational equity issue. It treats facility inequality not merely as a technical gap in school equipment but as a management concern involving allocation, student comfort, and the school's responsibility to provide supportive learning environments. By examining the experiences observed across classrooms in the same institution, the study seeks to reveal how small differences in infrastructure may produce unequal conditions during teaching and learning. Its analysis further connects practical facility management with the principles of fairness and ease in Islamic educational management. This offers a detailed, context-sensitive account that can inform more equitable planning, prioritization, and improvement of classroom facilities in everyday school practice for leaders.

This study examines inequality in classroom facilities at SMK Bina Putra Mandiri Parungpanjang, considers its implications for learning effectiveness, and identifies factors contributing to unequal access to cooling equipment. It asks

questions: how does facility inequality appear across the school; how are classroom cooling differences associated with students' comfort, attention, and participation; and what factors contribute to these differences? The study argues that unequal access to cooling facilities may create uneven learning conditions and potentially affect students' readiness to engage with lessons. It assumes that these disparities may be related to institutional resource allocation, budgeting, infrastructure conditions, and facility management practices. By addressing these questions, the research seeks to develop an understanding of the issue, clarify its educational implications, and identify considerations for more equitable facility provision and improvement.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a descriptive qualitative research design to explore classroom facility inequality at SMK Bina Putra Mandiri Parungpanjang. This design was selected because the research aimed to understand and describe the actual conditions, experiences, and perspectives of teachers and students regarding differences in classroom facilities (Dalinger et al., 2025; Waqar et al., 2024). Rather than testing statistical relationships or measuring variables numerically, the study focused on interpreting participants' experiences and examining how unequal access to cooling equipment influenced their learning environments. A case-oriented approach was also applied to investigate the phenomenon within its specific institutional context. The research involved three teachers and six students selected through purposive sampling, representing air-conditioned classrooms and classrooms equipped only with fans across Grades X, XI, and XII. This approach enabled an in-depth understanding of the research problem.

The research was conducted at SMK Bina Putra Mandiri, located in Parungpanjang District, Bogor Regency, West Java, Indonesia, from September to November 2026. The school was purposively selected because preliminary observations identified differences in cooling facilities across five classrooms, particularly between rooms equipped with air conditioners and those relying exclusively on fans (Akanzum & Pienaah, 2023; Ampo et al., 2025). This condition provided a relevant context for examining unequal facility distribution and its implications for students' learning experiences. The research focused on three main aspects: the forms of classroom facility inequality, its implications for learning effectiveness, and the factors contributing to unequal facility provision. Participants consisted of three teachers and six students with direct experience using the different classroom environments. Their perspectives were considered essential for understanding the institutional and educational dimensions of the phenomenon.

Data were collected through observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation. First, direct observations were conducted in five classrooms at 7:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m., and 11:00 a.m. to examine the availability and condition of air conditioners, fans, desks, chairs, projectors, lighting, ventilation, and the general classroom atmosphere. Second, semi-structured interviews were conducted with three teachers and six students using prepared interview guidelines. The questions explored participants' experiences with classroom facilities, physical comfort, concentration during lessons, perceived effects on learning activities, and difficulties in facility maintenance or damage reporting. Third, documentation involved collecting photographs of classroom conditions and school facility inventory records. These three techniques provided complementary information, allowing the researcher to examine the phenomenon from multiple perspectives and strengthen the credibility of the findings.

Data analysis followed three interconnected stages: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Data condensation involved selecting, organizing, simplifying, and focusing the information obtained from observations, interviews, and documentation according to the research objectives. Relevant information concerning facility inequality, classroom comfort, learning effectiveness, and contributing factors was identified and categorized. Data display involved organizing the condensed information into descriptive narratives and thematic categories to identify patterns, similarities, and differences between air-conditioned classrooms and fan-equipped classrooms. Conclusion drawing and verification involved interpreting the emerging findings, examining relationships among identified themes, and checking the consistency of interpretations against the collected evidence. Data credibility was strengthened through source triangulation by comparing teachers' and students' accounts, as well as technique triangulation by comparing observations, interviews, and documentation to ensure trustworthy findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Inequality in Classroom Learning Facilities

The field observations revealed considerable differences in the provision and condition of learning facilities across five classrooms at SMK Bina Putra Mandiri Parungpanjang. Two classrooms were equipped with air conditioners, providing relatively cool, quiet, and comfortable learning environments. In contrast, the other three classrooms relied exclusively on fans whose rotation had weakened and whose operation produced distracting noise. The differences extended beyond cooling equipment. The two air-conditioned classrooms had

relatively sturdy desks and chairs, functional projectors, and adequate lighting. Meanwhile, the three fan-equipped classrooms contained some unstable desks and chairs, lacked projectors in certain rooms, and experienced stuffy air circulation, particularly during midday lessons. These observations indicate that facility inequality involved several interconnected aspects of classroom infrastructure, rather than being restricted to differences in cooling equipment.

Students in the fan-equipped classrooms directly experienced these conditions during learning activities. One student explained, "During the afternoon, the classroom feels extremely hot. The fan rotates slowly, making me feel sleepy, so I have to use my book to fan myself." This statement illustrates how inadequate cooling facilities were experienced as physical discomfort during classroom activities. The need to use books for ventilation also indicates that students attempted to manage uncomfortable environmental conditions independently. Meanwhile, students in the air-conditioned classrooms experienced relatively cooler and quieter surroundings. The contrast between these experiences demonstrates that students within the same institution encountered different physical learning conditions, even though they participated in educational activities under the same school environment.

Implications of Facility Inequality for Learning Effectiveness

The findings identified differences in classroom learning experiences across four interconnected dimensions: instructional quality, material comprehension, learning motivation, and instructional time utilization. First, instructional delivery in the three fan-equipped classrooms required additional effort from teachers. The noise generated by the fans encouraged teachers to raise their voices so that students seated at the back could hear the explanations. This condition contributed to teacher fatigue and interrupted the continuity of instructional delivery. One teacher explained that explanations sometimes had to be repeated twice because several students did not pay attention during the initial explanation. In comparison, teachers in the two air-conditioned classrooms experienced quieter conditions, allowing explanations to be delivered without the same level of environmental disturbance.

Second, students' ability to follow instructional materials differed according to classroom conditions. Students experiencing excessive heat appeared to have greater difficulty maintaining concentration, particularly when lessons involved abstract concepts requiring sustained attention. Material that required careful explanation and cognitive engagement became more challenging to follow when students experienced physical discomfort. Third, differences were also visible in learning motivation and classroom participation. Students in the fan-equipped classrooms displayed sleepiness, fatigue, passive

behavior, and a desire to finish lessons quickly. Some students engaged in conversations with classmates or secretly used their mobile phones. Conversely, students in the air-conditioned classrooms demonstrated greater enthusiasm, asked questions more actively, and appeared more persistent when completing learning assignments.

Fourth, instructional time utilization was affected by differences in classroom conditions. In the fan-equipped classrooms, teachers spent additional time calming restless students, repeating explanations, and waiting for students to regain concentration after briefly leaving the classroom to seek fresh air. These activities reduced the time available for delivering planned instructional materials. Consequently, classroom activities did not always proceed according to the intended instructional schedule, and teachers sometimes needed to compensate for unfinished material during subsequent meetings. These findings demonstrate that classroom facility conditions were associated with differences in instructional processes, teacher workload, student engagement, and the utilization of available learning time.

Factors Contributing to Classroom Facility Inequality

Interviews with three teachers and six students identified three main factors contributing to differences in classroom facilities. The first factor concerned the different status of classroom spaces. The two air-conditioned classrooms were originally borrowed rooms rather than the school's regular classrooms. According to participants, the school initially lacked sufficient classrooms to accommodate all learning groups, requiring some classes to temporarily occupy available rooms that already had air-conditioning facilities. One participant explained, “Initially, we did not have enough classrooms, so we had to use another room. That room already had an air conditioner. The school did not install the air conditioner specifically for our class.” This explanation indicates that the availability of air conditioning was associated with the previous condition and function of the borrowed rooms.

The second factor involved inconsistent maintenance of classroom fans. Interviews revealed that equipment repairs were sometimes completed immediately but could also remain unresolved for several days or weeks. The speed of maintenance depended largely on whether the technician was available at school when the damage was reported. One teacher explained, “When a fan breaks down, sometimes it is repaired quickly, and sometimes it takes a long time. It depends on whether the technician is available. If the technician is here, it is repaired immediately. If not, we have to wait until someone can repair it.” Furthermore, the school did not have a regular maintenance schedule. Repairs

generally occurred after damage was reported rather than through routine inspections intended to identify potential equipment problems.

The third factor was the absence of a clear and formal system for reporting damaged facilities. Teachers and students explained that reports were generally communicated verbally to duty officers or homeroom teachers without written documentation or systematic recording. Consequently, information about damaged equipment could be overlooked, particularly when the individuals receiving the reports were unavailable or had completed their duties. The absence of a structured reporting mechanism also made it difficult to monitor whether reported problems had been addressed. Participants identified the lack of accessible reporting facilities, such as online forms or QR codes, as an additional obstacle to consistent maintenance follow-up. These findings indicate that communication and administrative procedures played an important role in determining how quickly classroom facility problems were addressed.

Discussion

The findings indicate that classroom facility inequality is not simply a difference in equipment ownership; it is a difference in the learning conditions available to students within the same school. The two air-conditioned rooms also had sturdier desks and chairs, usable projectors, and adequate lighting, whereas the three fan-equipped rooms had weaker and noisier fans, some unstable furniture, incomplete projector availability, and stuffier air (Anto et al., 2026; Rozikin et al., 2023). This pattern suggests that facility disparities may accumulate across several aspects of classroom quality rather than remain limited to temperature control. The contrast is especially important because students share the same institutional setting and educational objectives. Consequently, unequal physical conditions can produce unequal everyday experiences, even when students are formally enrolled in the same school and follow comparable learning activities across the wider school learning community.

These findings are consistent with educational facility research that treats the physical environment as a condition supporting teaching and learning. Previous discussions have commonly emphasized the availability, quality, and management of facilities, as well as their relationship with classroom comfort and learning outcomes (Haney et al., 2025; Romlah et al., 2023). The present findings support that general position by showing how inadequate cooling, noise, poor ventilation, and damaged furniture coincide with discomfort and reduced classroom engagement. However, the findings add a more specific dimension: disparities occur between classrooms within one institution, not merely between schools with different resource levels. This distinction matters because school-wide descriptions of facility adequacy may conceal unequal conditions

experienced by particular groups of students. Examining distribution at classroom level therefore provides a more detailed understanding of educational facility inequality in this particular institutional context.

The reported effects can be interpreted across four dimensions of instructional effectiveness: instructional quality, appropriateness, learning motivation, and time use (Idris et al., 2025; Javornik & Mirazchiyski, 2023). In fan-equipped rooms, teachers reportedly raised their voices over fan noise and sometimes repeated explanations because students had not attended to the first delivery. Students described heat, sleepiness, passivity, and distraction, while some talked or secretly used mobile phones. These conditions suggest that physical discomfort can interfere with communication between teachers and students and reduce opportunities for sustained attention. The findings do not establish that classroom temperature alone caused lower learning achievement; rather, they show how environmental constraints were experienced during lessons and how teachers adjusted their instructional practices. The distinction is important for interpreting qualitative evidence without making unsupported causal claims and may complicate the pacing of classroom instruction.

The causes identified in the interviews reveal that inequality emerged through interacting institutional circumstances rather than deliberate classroom favoritism. The two air-conditioned rooms were borrowed spaces that already had cooling equipment, while the school's regular classrooms relied on fans. Maintenance was also inconsistent: repairs could be completed quickly when a technician was present but delayed when support was unavailable. In addition, damage reports were communicated informally and were not systematically recorded, making follow-up dependent on individual availability and memory. Together, these findings point to weaknesses in facility planning, preventive maintenance, and reporting procedures (Agyei et al., 2024; Hendricks, 2023). They also show that an initially unintended difference can persist when no clear mechanism exists to monitor classroom conditions, prioritize repairs, and ensure that students' facility-related concerns reach responsible personnel and weaken the continuity of institutional response.

Theoretically, this study contributes to understanding educational facility management as a matter of distribution and everyday use, rather than merely procurement or inventory. The findings suggest that the effectiveness of school facilities depends not only on whether equipment exists, but also on where it is located, whether it functions properly, and whether maintenance systems keep it usable. From an Islamic educational management perspective, the principles of fairness, trustworthiness, and facilitating learning provide an ethical basis for evaluating these arrangements. Fairness does not necessarily require identical equipment in every room immediately; it requires transparent and defensible

decisions that prevent some students from consistently experiencing less supportive conditions. This interpretation connects facility management with educational equity and the institution's responsibility to protect students' opportunity to learn comfortably in routine school decision-making processes.

Practically, the findings indicate that the school needs a coordinated response addressing allocation, maintenance, and reporting. Classroom placement or rotation can be reviewed transparently, while the reasons for existing differences should be communicated clearly to students and teachers. Regular inspections, a designated maintenance officer, and a documented schedule can reduce dependence on the occasional availability of repair personnel. A simple digital reporting channel, including an online form or QR code, could make faults traceable and support timely follow-up. The contribution of this study is its detailed account of how classroom-level disparities are experienced and sustained, alongside feasible management priorities grounded in the observed conditions (Ampo et al., 2025; Assefa, 2026). These measures may help school leaders improve facility accountability, reduce avoidable disruption, and move toward more equitable and supportive learning environments with limited additional administrative complexity.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that classroom facility inequality at SMK Bina Putra Mandiri Parungpanjang represents not merely a difference in physical infrastructure but also an issue of educational equity that shapes students' learning experiences. The most important finding is that unequal access to cooling facilities, inconsistent maintenance, and the absence of formal damage-reporting procedures create different levels of comfort and support across classrooms, potentially affecting instructional quality, student motivation, and learning time efficiency. The main scholarly contribution of this study lies in extending the discussion of educational facility management beyond availability and procurement toward equitable distribution, maintenance accountability, and the principles of fairness and convenience in Islamic educational management. However, this study is limited by its focus on one school, five classrooms, and a relatively small number of participants. Future research should involve multiple schools, broader participant groups, and more diverse classroom conditions to develop comparative insights. The implications of these findings emphasize the importance of transparent facility allocation, systematic maintenance, and accessible reporting mechanisms to establish more equitable, comfortable, and effective learning environments.

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