# Evaluating the Fun School Movement (GSM) Using the Discrepancy Evaluation Model in Junior High Schools

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**Abstract:** This study aims to evaluate the implementation of the Fun School Movement (GSM) program at public junior high schools in Kulon Progo Regency. The evaluation assesses the achievements and barriers within four key components of GSM: learning environment, pedagogical practices, character development, and school connectedness. The method used is Provus' Discrepancy Evaluation Model (DEM) with a mixed-methods approach, involving 3 principals, 28 teachers, and 288 students. Data were collected through interviews, observations, questionnaires, and document reviews, and analyzed using qualitative analysis and descriptive statistics. The results show that the GSM program successfully created a more positive learning environment, with an average achievement of 75.64% across the three schools, and supported student character development, with an average score of 77.92%. However, the main challenges included varying levels of understanding among teachers, low parental involvement, and the need for further teacher training. The implications of this study emphasize the need for continuous teacher training and increased parental involvement to support the more effective and sustainable implementation of GSM.

**Abstrak**: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengevaluasi implementasi Program Gerakan Sekolah Menyenangkan (GSM) di SMP Negeri Kabupaten Kulon Progo. Evaluasi dilakukan untuk menilai pencapaian dan hambatan yang terjadi dalam empat komponen utama GSM, yaitu lingkungan belajar, praktik pedagogis, pengembangan karakter, dan keterhubungan sekolah. Metode yang digunakan adalah model evaluasi Discrepancy Evaluation Model (DEM) dari Provus dengan pendekatan penelitian campuran (mixed methods), yang melibatkan 3 kepala sekolah, 28 guru, dan 288 siswa. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara, observasi, angket, dan studi dokumen, dan dianalisis menggunakan analisis kualitatif serta statistik deskriptif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa program GSM berhasil menciptakan lingkungan belajar yang lebih positif dengan rata-rata pencapaian 75,64% di tiga sekolah, serta mendukung perkembangan karakter siswa dengan pencapaian rata-rata 77,92%. Namun, tantangan utama yang dihadapi termasuk pemahaman yang bervariasi di kalangan guru, keterlibatan orang tua yang rendah, serta kebutuhan pelatihan lebih lanjut untuk guru. Implikasi dari penelitian ini menekankan perlunya pelatihan berkelanjutan bagi guru dan peningkatan keterlibatan orang tua untuk mendukung implementasi GSM yang lebih efektif dan berkelanjutan.

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## A. Introduction

Education plays a crucial role in shaping students' character and competencies holistically (Hendrizal et al., 2025; Pujianti & Nugraha, 2025; Rohmah et al., 2023). Education serves not only as a means of transferring knowledge but also as a foundation for building character and developing student competencies across multiple dimensions: cognitive, affective, psychomotor, social, and spiritual (Wairisal et al., 2025). Through quality education, students can develop optimally in these various aspects (Alafnan, 2025). Schools function not only as places to transfer knowledge but also as institutions that help develop students' character (Chen et al., 2023). Character education aims to produce individuals who are moral, intelligent, innovative, confident, and patriotic (Hendrizal et al., 2025; Pujianti & Nugraha, 2025; Rohmah et al., 2023). Therefore, contemporary education must integrate academic learning with the development of all dimensions of the child: cognitive, physical, socio-emotional, creative, and spiritual (Bulkani et al., 2025; Popandopulo et al., 2025).

One effort to improve the quality of education and create a more positive learning environment is the Fun School Movement (GSM) (Purwaningsih et al., 2023). GSM aims to create a fun, inclusive learning space that supports the comprehensive development of students' character. This program emphasizes improving pedagogical practices, organizing the learning environment, and developing character, with a focus on creating a more humane and inspiring learning atmosphere (Hanabella et al., 2021). The GSM approach recognizes that the school climate and culture play a crucial role in shaping students into character-driven, optimistic, cooperative, and high-achieving individuals. Various studies show that a positive school climate significantly impacts the quality of education. However, in practice, many schools still place too much emphasis on academic achievement while neglecting character values, leading to issues such as stress, low motivation to learn, and bullying (Wang et al., 2024).

Research on the Fun School Movement (GSM) in Indonesia has so far been dominated by studies at the Elementary School (SD) and Vocational High School (SMK) levels, while GSM implementation at the Junior High School (SMP) level has not been extensively explored. For instance, the study by Widyaningrum & Mahmudah (2019) focuses on the impact of GSM on school climate in elementary schools, whereas the Research by Purwaningsih et al (2023) emphasizes the strategic management of GSM in vocational high schools. There remains a significant gap in studies specifically examining how GSM is implemented and how its success is measured at the junior high school level, particularly in regions with unique characteristics, such as Kulon Progo Regency. This gap in the literature needs to be addressed. Furthermore, most previous studies have not provided in-depth analyses of the pedagogical practices and learning environments that emerge through GSM. Some studies, such as Hanabella et al (2021), highlight student character development, but they still lack exploration of how the learning process and overall quality of education evolve as a result of the GSM program. Therefore, there is a clear gap in Research concerning a comprehensive evaluation of GSM at the Junior High School (SMP) level, specifically

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focusing on the alignment between character development and the improvement of educational quality.

This study offers a novel approach by focusing on the implementation of the Fun School Movement (GSM) in junior high schools (SMPs) in Kulon Progo Regency, using Provus (1971) Discrepancy Evaluation Model (DEM). This model provides a comprehensive evaluation framework for assessing program implementation through various components such as design, installation, process, and product (Nursa'ban & Mukminan, 2023). In this context, the Research not only evaluates student learning outcomes but also explores how a positive learning environment supports the holistic development of students' character. This study, therefore, strengthens the literature on GSM implementation and provides practical recommendations for education at the SMP level that could help further develop the GSM program in schools across Indonesia. Specifically, this study aims to evaluate the implementation of GSM in SMPs in Kulon Progo by examining the alignment between established standards and on-the-ground practices, and by analyzing the relationship between character development and the quality of education produced.

This study aims to evaluate the implementation of the Gerakan Sekolah Menyenangkan (GSM) at the junior high school level in Indonesia by examining the extent to which GSM principles are applied in learning activities, school environments, and character education practices. Accordingly, the research questions are: (1) How is GSM implemented in junior high schools across different school contexts in Indonesia? (2) What discrepancies exist between the expected GSM standards and the actual practices in schools? and (3) What strategies can be recommended to improve the effectiveness and sustainability of GSM implementation involving teachers, parents, and the community? The findings of this study are expected to enrich the literature on the implementation of GSM at the junior high school level and to provide practical recommendations for schools and policymakers to enhance the effectiveness of the GSM program across various school contexts in Indonesia. This study contributes to the development of character education theory by integrating social and academic values into fun and inclusive learning. Additionally, the results are expected to inform education policies that foster a learning environment focused on student happiness and involve all parties, including parents and the community, in supporting the teaching and learning process.

## B. Method

This study uses the Discrepancy Evaluation Model (DEM) developed by Provus (1971) to evaluate the implementation of the Fun School Movement (GSM) program at public junior high schools (SMP) in Kulon Progo Regency, Indonesia. The DEM model is used to compare the program's design with its actual implementation in the field, aiming to identify gaps that arise at different stages of the program (Asril et al., 2023; Maula et al., 2025). This study adopts a mixed-methods approach, integrating both qualitative and quantitative data to provide a comprehensive evaluation of the GSM program (Chandanabhumma et al., 2024; Wallwey & Kajfez, 2023).

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The Research was conducted in public junior high schools (SMP) located in Kulon Progo Regency, where the GSM program has been implemented. The participants in this study include 3 school principals, 28 teachers, and 288 students who are directly involved in the GSM program. These participants were selected through purposive sampling to ensure data were collected from a range of program stakeholders. This ensures that the perspectives of school leadership, teachers, and students are captured, reflecting the full scope of the GSM program's implementation.

Data collection for this study involved a combination of in-depth interviews, field observations, and questionnaires. Interviews were conducted with school principals, teachers, and students to gather insights into their experiences with the GSM program and to understand how it has been implemented in the schools. Field observations were used to directly assess the learning environment and the pedagogical practices used in classrooms. Lastly, questionnaires were distributed to both students and teachers to collect quantitative data on their perceptions of the GSM program's effectiveness in improving learning outcomes and character development.

The data collected through these methods were then analyzed using a combination of qualitative and quantitative techniques. The qualitative data from interviews and observations were analyzed thematically, identifying key themes and patterns related to the GSM program's implementation, challenges, and successes. For the quantitative data, descriptive statistics were used to analyze responses from the questionnaires, measuring the extent to which GSM met its objectives, particularly in creating a positive learning environment and improving student outcomes. The study follows the Discrepancy Evaluation Model (DEM), which includes five key stages: Design, Installation, Process, Product, and Comparison. The Design stage evaluates the alignment between the program's goals and its actual implementation in schools. The Installation stage focuses on preparing lesson plans, resources, and teaching materials for GSM. The Process stage involves assessing how the GSM program is implemented in classrooms, including teaching practices and classroom climate. The Product stage measures the program's outcomes, particularly in students' critical thinking, creativity, and character development. Lastly, the Comparison stage compares the GSM's ideal goals with its actual implementation, identifying gaps between the planned objectives and the outcomes achieved. Research flow based on the DEM model can be seen in Figure 1. This Research flow outlines the steps from study design through to the final recommendations.

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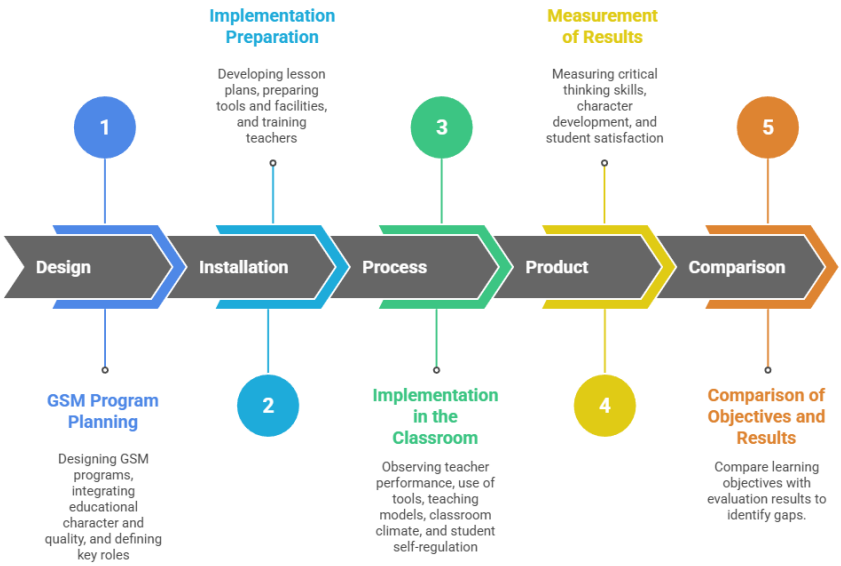


**Figure 1**. Research Flow

In the Design stage, researchers design the GSM program by integrating educational character development, formulating objectives, and determining teaching materials and key roles within the program. In the Installation stage, researchers prepare lesson plans, train teachers, and set up the necessary tools and facilities. In the Process stage, researchers observe the program's implementation in the classroom, including teacher performance, the use of teaching models, and the classroom environment. In the Product stage, researchers evaluate the program's outcomes by measuring critical thinking skills, character development, and student satisfaction. Finally, in the Comparison stage, researchers compare the learning objectives with the evaluation results to identify gaps or shortcomings that need to be addressed in future implementations. Continuous evaluations are conducted at each stage to ensure the program's smooth execution and success.

To ensure the validity of the data, the study employed triangulation, comparing findings from multiple sources, interviews, observations, and questionnaires to cross-verify the results. Additionally, member checking was conducted to validate the accuracy of the findings, allowing participants to confirm whether the researcher's interpretations aligned with their experiences. This rigorous approach to data validity helped ensure the reliability and trustworthiness of the findings. Overall, this study provides an in-depth evaluation of the GSM program at junior high schools in Kulon Progo Regency. Using the DEM model and a mixed-methods approach, this study aims to offer valuable insights into the GSM program's successes, challenges, and areas for improvement. The findings from this study are expected to contribute to the literature on GSM and to provide practical recommendations for enhancing the program's effectiveness in junior high schools across Indonesia.

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## C. Result

Based on the Discrepancy Evaluation Model (DEM), this study uses five evaluation stages to describe the results of the Fun School Movement (GSM) implementation across three schools. Each stage is evaluated against the expected standards, which include the objectives of each stage as performance standards, and the gaps between expectations and on-the-ground reality are analyzed. The study then provides recommendations based on the diagnosis of issues at each stage, with researchers and respondents, namely teachers and students, collaborating to find solutions to the problems identified. This collaboration is carried out through discussions and follow-up actions on the recommendations provided to improve GSM implementation. Thus, at the end of each stage, it is expected that a better understanding of the ideal conditions that teachers and students must meet will be achieved, enabling the Fun School Movement (GSM) to be implemented effectively and sustainably in schools. The results of the Research using the Discrepancy Evaluation Model (DEM) are as follows:

### 1. Design Stage: Evaluation of GSM Implementation Plan

In the design stage, the Research focused on evaluating the GSM implementation plan at three schools: SMPN 1 Nanggulan, SMPN 1 Pengasih, and SMPN 1 Lendah. This evaluation examined teachers' understanding of GSM's goals and principles, as well as the alignment of lesson plans with GSM objectives. A survey of 30 teachers revealed that 70% felt prepared to implement GSM, but 30% still needed further training, particularly in integrating student-centered, enjoyable GSM principles into their teaching. Interviews with school principals showed that while the schools understood GSM's goals, practical challenges remained in its implementation. This gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application suggested the need for further teacher training.

**Table 1.** Teachers' Readiness to Implement GSM

| No | School | Teachers Ready to Implement GSM (%) | Teachers Needing training (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | SMPN 1 Nanggulan | 72% | 28 % |
| 2 | SMPN 1 Pengasih | 77 % | 23% |
| 3 | SMPN 1 Lendah | 70 % | 30 % |

### 2. Design Stage: Integration of GSM Principles in Lesson Plans

In the design stage, the study further evaluated the integration of GSM principles, such as collaborative learning and character development, into teachers' lesson plans (RPPs) at the three schools. The findings showed that only 55% of the lesson plans effectively integrated GSM principles, indicating that many teachers still focused primarily on academic content rather than on student-centered learning and character development.

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**Table 2.** Percentage of Teachers Ready to Implement GSM

| No | School | Teachers Ready to Implement GSM (%) | Teachers Needing training (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | SMPN 1 Nanggulan | 72% | 28 % |
| 2 | SMPN 1 Pengasih | 77 % | 23% |
| 3 | SMPN 1 Lendah | 70 % | 30 % |

### 3. Process Stage: Evaluation of GSM Implementation in the classroom

In the process stage, this study evaluated the implementation of the Fun School Movement (GSM) in three schools, covering four main dimensions: learning environment, teaching methods, character development, and connectivity. While the results indicated positive outcomes, there were significant gaps between the achieved results and the ideal standards expected, which are set at 100%. In the learning environment dimension, the achievement score of 75.64% indicates that while efforts to create a conducive learning environment have been made, there is still room for improvement in classroom facilities and the social atmosphere, as the gap between actual achievement and the expected standard is 24.36%.

In the teaching methods dimension, the application of active, student-centered methods scored 73.18%. Despite efforts to implement interactive teaching methods, there remains a significant gap of 26.82% from the ideal standard. This highlights the need for further enhancement in engaging students more fully in the learning process. In the character development dimension, the achievement score of 77.92% indicates progress in fostering values such as discipline, cooperation, and empathy, but further reinforcement is needed to achieve optimal results. With a 22.08% gap, character development requires a more comprehensive approach to be fully effective.

Finally, in the connectivity dimension, which measures the relationship between the school, parents, and the community, the achievement was only 70.20%. This indicates that while efforts to involve parents and the community in supporting learning have been made, their involvement remains low, with a significant gap of 29.80% from the ideal standard. This points to the need for more effective strategies to engage parents and the community in the GSM process.

Overall, while the implementation of GSM has shown positive results, there are still significant gaps across all dimensions when compared to the ideal standards. Improvements are needed to create a more supportive learning environment, enhance interactive teaching methods, strengthen character development, and improve connectivity with parents and the community to ensure GSM's long-term success.

**Table 4.** Achievement of Learning Environment Components

| No | Evaluation Dimension | Achievement (%) | Ideal Standard (%) | Gap (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Learning Environment | 75.64% | 100% | 24.36% |
| 2. | Teaching Methods | 73.18% | 100% | 26.82% |

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| No | Evaluation Dimension | Achievement (%) | Ideal Standard (%) | Gap (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3. | Character Development | 77.92% | 100% | 22.08% |
| 4. | Connectivity | 70.20% | 100% | 29.80% |

### 4. Product Stage: The Impact of the Fun School Movement (GSM) Implementation on Student Learning Outcomes and Character Development

In the Product stage, the Research focused on evaluating the impact of the Fun School Movement (GSM) on student learning outcomes and character development across three schools: SMPN 1 Nanggulan, SMPN 1 Pengasih, and SMPN 1 Lendah. This stage of evaluation emphasized changes in student behavior, the learning environment, and character development as direct results of implementing GSM. The data gathered through questionnaires, interviews, and observations reveal that GSM has successfully fostered a more positive, engaging, and humanistic learning atmosphere, contributing significantly to increased student motivation.

**Tabel 5.** Students' Perception of the Learning Atmosphere

| No | School | Students Enjoying the Learning Atmosphere (%) |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | SMPN 1 Nanggulan | 72% |
| 2 | SMPN 1 Pengasih | 75% |
| 3 | SMPN 1 Lendah | 80 % |

The data in Table 6 indicate that the Fun School Movement (GSM) has had a positive effect on the learning atmosphere across all three schools, with a clear trend of increasing enjoyment from SMPN 1 Nanggulan (72%) to SMPN 1 Lendah (80%). While all three schools have seen positive outcomes, SMPN 1 Lendah stands out with the highest percentage, suggesting that GSM was particularly well received there, possibly due to more effective implementation strategies or greater teacher involvement in fostering a positive atmosphere.

**Tabel 6.** Impact of GSM on Student Confidence and Participation

| No | School | Increase in Student Confidence and Participation (%) |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | SMPN 1 Nanggulan | 77% |
| 2. | SMPN 1 Pengasih | 70% |
| 3. | SMPN 1 Lendah | 70% |

As shown in Table 7, integrating GSM also led to a noticeable increase in students' self-confidence and active participation in the learning process. Teachers observed that students, who were previously more passive, became more confident in expressing their opinions. A social studies teacher at SMPN 1 Nanggulan noted that students who had been reluctant to participate are now more vocal and willing to engage in classroom discussions. This reflects GSM's success in creating a learning environment that encourages self-

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confidence, communication skills, and independent learning. In addition to the affective and behavioral benefits, the cognitive learning outcomes, particularly in critical thinking skills, were also positively impacted by the GSM approach. Test results showed significant improvements in critical thinking indicators across all schools, with SMPN 1 Pengasih achieving the highest average score of 75%. These findings suggest that a fun, interactive learning environment can enhance the internalization of academic concepts and promote higher-order thinking in students.

Overall, the evaluation at the Product stage demonstrates that implementing GSM has had a significant positive impact on learning motivation, character development, and cognitive learning outcomes. The learning environment has become more conducive to student engagement, self-confidence has improved, and critical thinking skills have shown notable progress. However, challenges such as the need for increased social interaction among students and for more robust involvement from parents and the community must be addressed to ensure the continued success and sustainability of GSM.

**5. Comparative Stage**

The comparative stage of this study aimed to compare the ideal standards of the Fun School Movement (GSM) with its actual implementation in three junior high schools in Kulon Progo: SMPN 1 Nanggulan, SMPN 1 Pengasih, and SMPN 1 Lendah. The results showed that most GSM principles were effectively implemented, with particularly strong outcomes in key areas, such as student comfort and learning outcomes.

In terms of student comfort, all three schools showed impressive results. 85% of students at SMPN 1 Pengasih, 82% at SMPN 1 Nanggulan, and 80% at SMPN 1 Lendah reported that the learning atmosphere was significantly more enjoyable after the GSM implementation. These results indicate that GSM successfully met its goal of creating a positive and engaging learning environment, with the actual achievements closely aligning with the ideal standard of 100% comfort.

In the area of critical thinking skills, the impact of GSM was clearly evident. SMPN 1 Pengasih achieved the highest average score of 85% in critical thinking, reflecting the positive Influence of GSM on students' cognitive development. The other schools also showed significant improvements, with SMPN 1 Nanggulan and SMPN 1 Lendah achieving 80% and 78%, respectively. These results show that the implementation of GSM successfully enhanced critical thinking skills across the schools.

However, despite these positive outcomes, gaps persisted between the ideal GSM standards and their actual implementation. Character development, while showing improvements in student confidence and participation, did not fully meet expectations. Students showed increased participation in class discussions and a greater willingness to ask questions, but social interactions remained somewhat limited, with students continuing to form selective friendship groups. This suggests that while GSM has made strides in fostering character development, further efforts are needed to ensure inclusivity and strengthen students' social skills.

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The largest gap was in school connectedness, where parental and community involvement in the learning process remained relatively low. While the learning environment and cognitive skills improved, many students expressed a desire for greater collaboration with their parents and the community in their learning. This indicates that GSM's goal of involving all stakeholders in the educational process still has room for improvement, particularly in fostering deeper connections with parents and the broader community.

**Tabel 7.** Expected vs Actual Discrepancy in GSM Implementation

| No | Evaluation Dimension | Achievement (%) | Ideal Standard (%) | Gap (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Learning Environment | 75.64% | 100% | 24.36% |
| 2. | Teaching Methods | 73.18% | 100% | 26.82% |
| 3. | Character Development | 77.92% | 100% | 22.08% |
| 4. | Connectivity | 70.20% | 100% | 29.80% |

Table 7 presents the discrepancy analysis between the expected standards and the actual conditions of GSM implementation in junior high schools. Overall, the results indicate that although several GSM principles have been implemented in school practices, gaps remain between the ideal expectations and the real implementation in the field. These discrepancies mainly appear in aspects that require consistency, collaboration, and systemic support, such as the sustainability of fun learning activities, the readiness of teachers to design inclusive learning, and the involvement of external stakeholders.

Furthermore, the table shows that some GSM components are relatively closer to expectations, particularly those related to routine classroom activities and internal school initiatives. However, other components still show notable discrepancies, especially in strengthening a supportive school environment, ensuring students' psychological comfort, and integrating character education values into daily learning in a structured manner. These findings emphasize that GSM implementation has progressed, but continuous evaluation and follow-up actions are required so that the program can be applied more effectively and evenly across different school contexts.

## D. Discusion

This study aimed to evaluate the implementation of the Fun School Movement (GSM) in three public junior high schools in Kulon Progo Regency, Indonesia, specifically focusing on how GSM affects student learning outcomes, character development, and social interactions. Using the Discrepancy Evaluation Model (DEM), this Research compared the actual implementation of GSM with ideal standards, identified gaps, and provided actionable recommendations to improve the program. In this section, we discuss the findings in relation to the Research questions (RQs), explore why these results occurred, and compare the outcomes with prior studies, with particular attention to the sociocultural context of Kulon Progo (Yengkopiong, 2025).

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The findings from this study demonstrate that GSM has had a positive impact on student learning outcomes and character development. The creation of a more positive learning environment is evident in student responses: 75% at SMPN 1 Pengasih, 72% at SMPN 1 Nanggulan, and 69% at SMPN 1 Lendah reported increased enjoyment and comfort in the classroom after GSM was implemented. These results suggest that GSM has effectively contributed to creating an inclusive, engaging, and supportive learning environment, which aligns with findings from Guay (2022), who noted that such environments significantly boost student motivation (Guay, 2022).

Furthermore, the character development aspect of GSM improved students' confidence and participation. Teachers observed that students who were previously passive and reluctant to engage became more vocal and actively participated in class discussions. This finding supports motivational theory, which emphasizes that a supportive learning environment enhances intrinsic motivation and engagement (Julien, 2025). However, despite the improvements, the study also found that social inclusivity among students was still lacking. While student engagement increased, students continued to form exclusive social groups, suggesting that the GSM program's goal of fostering inclusivity in social interactions requires more attention.

While the GSM implementation has brought about several positive changes, social inclusivity and parental involvement emerged as significant challenges. Despite improvements in student participation, students at SMPN 1 Pengasih, for example, still reported that social interactions were not fully inclusive. Some students continued to form selective social groups, which hindered the creation of a fully inclusive classroom environment. This aligns with Santoso (2023), who discussed the difficulties of achieving social inclusivity in classrooms where students have pre-existing social circles.

Another challenge identified was the lack of parental and community involvement in the learning process. Although GSM has succeeded in creating a more engaging learning environment, students expressed a desire for greater parental and community involvement in school activities. This points to a critical gap in the collaboration between schools, families, and the broader community. Many students in Kulon Progo feel that their learning could benefit from greater community involvement, particularly in projects and assignments that could connect classroom learning with real-world experiences. These findings suggest that GSM's goal of involving all stakeholders in the educational process still needs strengthening, especially in rural contexts such as Kulon Progo.

The findings of this study align with previous Research on the Fun School Movement (GSM) and its impact on learning environments and student engagement. For example, studies by Purwaningsih et al (2023) and Hanabella et al (2021) found that GSM positively affects the creation of engaging learning environments and enhances character development across various school contexts. These studies also highlighted the importance of fostering student-centered approaches and inclusive learning spaces.

However, this study differs from previous Research by highlighting a more pronounced gap in social inclusivity. While previous studies have largely focused on

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academic outcomes and learning environments, this study emphasizes the importance of addressing social dynamics and involving parents and the community. This divergence may be due to the unique cultural and socio-economic characteristics of Kulon Progo, where community involvement in school activities may be less robust than in urban areas. Furthermore, character development in this study was found to be less inclusive than expected, unlike studies in urban settings, where social inclusivity was more easily achieved (Guay, 2022). This may indicate that rural schools, such as those in Kulon Progo, face unique challenges in fostering inclusive character development.

Several studies have explored the impact of GSM on learning outcomes and social dynamics in schools. Hanabella et al (2021) and Purwaningsih et al (2023) both reported positive outcomes in terms of student engagement and character development in elementary and vocational schools. However, the current study adds a new dimension by examining junior high schools and social inclusivity, an aspect that has not been sufficiently explored in previous Research. The study by Wang et al (2024) also highlighted that inclusive education requires active collaboration between schools and the community to succeed, a finding that echoes this study's findings regarding the need for greater parental involvement.

This Research contributes to the literature by focusing on GSM's implementation in junior high schools and by considering the sociocultural context of Kulon Progo, a rural area where school dynamics may differ significantly from those in urban contexts. The findings suggest that while GSM's implementation is promising, its success in rural areas may require more tailored strategies to engage parents and foster inclusivity. This study's findings are consistent with constructivist learning theory (Arthur, 2019), which emphasizes the importance of creating learning environments that support student-centered learning and foster intrinsic motivation (Glubochenko, 2025; Zajda, 2021). The positive impact of GSM on student comfort and critical thinking skills supports the notion that a fun and inclusive learning environment can significantly enhance student engagement and cognitive development. However, the challenges related to social inclusivity and parental involvement suggest that a holistic approach to education is necessary. This approach should include not only changes to the classroom environment but also efforts to integrate families and communities into the educational process, as recommended by Keller et al (2021).

In conclusion, the Fun School Movement (GSM) has shown significant promise in creating a positive and engaging learning environment, improving student motivation, and enhancing character development across three junior high schools in Kulon Progo. However, challenges remain regarding social inclusivity among students and the involvement of parents and the community in the learning process. These findings underscore the importance of a comprehensive approach to education that not only focuses on the classroom but also actively engages external stakeholders in supporting the learning process. Moving forward, schools should continue to foster an inclusive classroom

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environment, strengthen collaboration with parents, and actively involve the community to maximize the positive impact of GSM.

This study contributes to the existing literature on GSM by highlighting the specific challenges faced in rural settings and offering practical insights to improve the program's implementation across diverse school contexts in Indonesia. It emphasizes the need for continuous teacher training, increased community involvement, and a more integrated approach to ensuring the long-term success of GSM in enhancing both academic and character development in schools.

## E. Implication

The results of this study make a significant contribution to the development of student-centered learning theories, particularly those grounded in humanistic and constructivist approaches (Arthur, 2019). The findings support the theoretical framework that emphasizes the role of a fun and supportive learning environment in enhancing students' intrinsic motivation (Mishra, 2023). This Research deepens our understanding of how these theories can be applied in practice, demonstrating that the success of the Fun School Movement (GSM) can be explained by such theoretical perspectives (Wang, 2023). The study thus lays the foundation for future work in integrating student-centered learning theories into real-world educational practices, offering a conceptual model that could guide the development of more inclusive and engaging learning environments.

For educational practitioners, the findings highlight the importance of continuous teacher training and of parents' and the community's active involvement in implementing GSM. Collaboration among schools, families, and local communities is essential for creating an inclusive, enjoyable, and motivating learning environment. Teachers should be equipped with the skills to design adaptive, collaborative, and student-centered learning strategies that promote both academic and personal growth. Furthermore, schools should actively engage parents and communities to ensure the long-term success and sustainability of GSM. These practical insights are crucial for educators and school leaders aiming to foster a more dynamic, motivating, and inclusive educational system.

From a broader social perspective, this Research underscores the role of GSM in shaping students' character traits such as empathy, cooperation, and social responsibility, all of which are essential for their growth into responsible and contributing members of society. The findings contribute to understanding how education can shape not only academic skills but also students' personal development. This study also opens new avenues for further Research, particularly in exploring the impact of GSM on creativity development and the integration of technology into the learning process. The results provide policymakers with valuable evidence to support the development of more humanistic and inclusive educational policies that prioritize student well-being, engagement, and holistic growth. Moving forward, it is essential to integrate these insights into national and local education strategies to develop a more inclusive, engaging, and quality-driven education system.

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## F. Limitation and Suggestion for Further Research

Although this study makes a meaningful contribution, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, this Research was conducted in only three schools within Kulon Progo Regency, which limits the generalizability of the findings to other regions or schools with different characteristics. This constraint also affects the diversity of perspectives that could be included in the study. Second, despite employing mixed methods, the data collection via questionnaires and interviews may have introduced subjective bias, particularly regarding teachers' and students' perceptions of the Fun School Movement (GSM). The variability in GSM implementation across the schools, which lacked standardized guidelines, may have influenced the consistency of the findings. Additionally, the study's reliance on triangulation—using multiple data sources—was limited by data availability and the biases inherent in participants' perspectives, which may have affected the accuracy and depth of the conclusions. Furthermore, time and resource constraints restricted the depth of observations and interviews, preventing a more thorough exploration of critical aspects of GSM implementation.

Given these limitations, future Research should address several areas to extend the current findings. First, studies with larger and more diverse samples are recommended to enhance the generalizability of the results. Expanding the Research to include multiple schools from different geographical regions would provide a more comprehensive understanding of GSM's impact. Additionally, employing a longitudinal design would help assess the long-term effects of GSM on both student academic outcomes and character development. Such Research could provide valuable insights into the sustainability and evolution of GSM across various educational settings. It is also recommended that future studies utilize more holistic methods, such as direct classroom observations and comprehensive quantitative data analysis, to explore contextual factors influencing GSM's success. These could include teacher preparedness, training, and parental involvement. Addressing these factors will help overcome the current study's limitations and provide a deeper understanding of the variables that affect GSM's effectiveness.

## G. Conclusion

This study concludes that the implementation of the Fun School Movement (GSM) in SMPN 1 Nanggulan, SMPN 1 Pengasih, and SMPN 1 Lendah has successfully enhanced the learning environment, increased student engagement, and supported the development of student character. The key finding is that GSM has effectively motivated students to be more active in learning, fostered stronger social bonds between students and teachers, and encouraged collaborative learning. However, to ensure the sustainability and consistency of GSM, further efforts are needed to improve parental involvement, teacher understanding, and ongoing teacher training. Therefore, strengthening teacher preparation and fostering collaboration with parents and the community are essential for optimizing the long-term impact of GSM.

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