

Fun School Movements Play a Crucial Role in Improving the Socio-Emotional Well-Being of Students

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Abstract

The Fun School Movement plays a role in improving students' socio-emotional well-being. This study highlights the growing importance of a supportive and engaging school environment, as students' emotional and social well-being is crucial to their overall development. This study underlines the importance of the Fun School Movement in promoting a balanced and healthy learning environment, which can serve as a model for other schools aiming to improve their students' socio-emotional well-being. The purpose of this study was to examine how the implementation and impact of the Fun School Movement in improving students' socio-emotional well-being. This study used a descriptive qualitative method, focusing on observation, interviews, and documentation with data analysis according to Miles and Huberman. The findings of the study revealed that a fun school environment plays an important role in fostering a sense of security, belonging, and happiness, which significantly affect students' emotional and motivational states. The role of teachers as emotional companions has been shown to be important in providing support and guidance, helping students overcome personal and academic challenges. Parental involvement has been shown to strengthen the bond between home and school, which further supports students' well-being. The findings are expected to contribute to the understanding that students' holistic development depends not only on academic achievement but also on emotional support and social engagement.

Keywords: Fun School Movements, Socio-Emotional Well-Being, School Environment

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INTRODUCTION

The socio-emotional well-being of students has emerged as a critical aspect of education in the 21st century (Tuomi, 2022; Maoulida et al., 2023; Obeidat et al., 2024; Saharani & Diana, 2024). Amid increasing academic pressure and societal demands, many students struggle with emotional challenges such as anxiety, low self-esteem, and social isolation (Ali et al., 2024; Chung & Park, 2024). Schools, as integral environments for student development, bear the responsibility of addressing these issues (Gregory et al., 2021; Robichaux et al., 2022). The Fun School Movement (FSM) has gained traction as an innovative approach aimed at transforming traditional educational settings into spaces that prioritize student happiness, engagement, and emotional health. FSM integrates playful learning, emotional support, and positive social interactions, creating a holistic environment conducive to personal growth (Acharya & Sigdel, 2024).

This movement recognizes the importance of fostering not only academic excellence but also emotional resilience, which is vital for students to navigate life's complexities (Feraco et al.,

2023; Maisuroh & Aisyah, 2024; Dewi et al., 2024). The need for initiatives like FSM is supported by various social realities. A growing body of evidence indicates that emotional struggles among students often go unnoticed in conventional education systems (Hafina et al., 2024; Ataman et al., 2024). In Indonesia, challenges among students are linked to absenteeism and reduced classroom participation (Romlah et al., 2023; Effendi et al., 2021; Rahmi et al., 2024). Several evidence reveal that students participating in FSM activities exhibit higher levels of engagement and peer collaboration, contributing to a more vibrant and empathetic school culture.

Existing research corroborates the effectiveness of initiatives like FSM in fostering socio-emotional well-being. School-based programs integrating social-emotional learning (SEL) improve student outcomes in emotional regulation, social skills, and academic achievement (Dyson et al., 2021; Kamei & Harriott, 2021; Sanjani et al., 2024). Vila et al. (2021) emphasize that cultivating emotional intelligence through structured school programs enhances students' ability to manage interpersonal relationships. Students exposed to playful and emotionally supportive environments report higher levels of self-confidence and reduced anxiety (Halimi et al., 2021; Papoutsi et al., 2021). Research by Kartol (2023) highlights that positive emotions play a pivotal role in broadening students' thought-action repertoires, leading to greater creativity and resilience. These studies collectively affirm the impact of innovative school movements like FSM in addressing students' socio-emotional needs.

Despite the growing body of literature on FSM and similar programs, significant gaps remain in understanding their long-term impact and the contextual adaptations necessary for different educational environments. Most existing studies focus on short-term outcomes or generalized findings, leaving a void in region-specific insights. This research seeks to fill these gaps by examining the unique application and outcomes of FSM at SMPN 3 Bondowoso. The novelty lies in its focus on a rural Indonesian setting, highlighting how FSM can be adapted to local contexts to maximize socio-emotional benefits for students. This study also explores the role of teacher training and parental involvement as critical factors in FSM's success.

This study aims to investigate the implementation and impact of the Fun School Movement in improving students' socio-emotional well-being at SMPN 3 Bondowoso. This study seeks to explore how a pleasant school environment for students to learn, which is supported by teachers as learning facilitators at school. This study also seeks to bridge parental involvement in the success of the program. By addressing these objectives, this research seeks to provide actionable insights for educators, policymakers, and stakeholders interested in replicating FSM's success in similar educational settings.

The Fun School Movement represents a paradigm shift in education, emphasizing the holistic development of students by integrating socio-emotional well-being into the core fabric of schooling. This research posits that FSM's success lies in its ability to create emotionally supportive and inclusive learning environments. It argues that initiatives like FSM are not merely supplementary but essential for addressing the challenges posed by modern education systems. By focusing on SMPN 3 Bondowoso, this study demonstrates how FSM can be effectively implemented in a rural context, challenging the misconception that such programs are only feasible in well-resourced urban schools. Moreover, this research builds on the premise that emotional well-being is foundational to academic and personal success, advocating for FSM's broader adoption as a sustainable educational strategy. The findings are expected to contribute to the growing discourse on SEL and innovative school movements, offering practical recommendations for educators and policymakers worldwide.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive type to deeply understand the role of the Fun School Movement (GSM) in improving the social-emotional well-being of students at SMPN 3 Bondowoso. The qualitative approach was chosen because it allows for a thorough exploration of complex phenomena through direct data mining from the experience and perspective of the research subject. SMPN 3 Bondowoso was chosen as the research location because this school has applied GSM principles in its various programs and activities. In addition, the high involvement of teachers, students, and parents provides an opportunity for researchers to observe firsthand the implementation of GSM and its impact on student welfare (Hirose & Creswell, 2023).

The data in this study was collected through three main techniques, namely in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation. In-depth interviews were conducted with teachers, students, and parents to obtain detailed information related to their experiences, views, and roles in the implementation of GSM. Observation was carried out to directly observe school activities, interactions between students and teachers, and parent involvement. Documentation is used to collect supporting data, such as activity photos, program reports, and other relevant documents. This combination of data collection techniques aims to obtain comprehensive and valid information. Table 1 shows how each technique makes an important contribution to data collection. In-depth interviews function to explore subjective views, observations provide a contextual perspective, and documentation adds a historical dimension to the research findings.

Table 1. Data Collection Techniques

Technique	Subject	Purpose	Process
Interview	Teachers, students, and parents	Understand the subject's experience and views	Interview guidelines, recordings
Observation	School activities	Observing GSM interaction and implementation	Field notes, photos
Documentation	School programs and activities	Get supporting data	Photos, written documents

The data analysis in this study uses the Miles and Huberman model which consists of three main stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn (Hamzani et al., 2023). Data reduction was carried out by selecting relevant data and grouping them based on research themes, such as teacher roles, parent involvement, and the impact of GSM. The presentation of data is carried out in the form of narratives, tables, and diagrams to provide a systematic and easy-to-understand picture. The final stage is the drawing of conclusions, where the findings are analyzed to answer the research question. This model allows for systematic and flexible analysis, ensuring that the data obtained can be used to comprehensively explain the phenomenon.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Fun School Environment

A welcoming and fun school is a fundamental element in supporting the success of the Fun School Movement (GSM). A supportive school environment not only creates a conducive learning atmosphere, but also increases students' emotional involvement with the learning process. At SMPN 3 Bondowoso, efforts to create a friendly school habitat are carried out through various initiatives, such as aesthetic classroom management, provision of adequate facilities, and a humanist approach to teachers. This atmosphere provides comfort for students to express

themselves, feel accepted, and valued. In this context, GSM makes a real contribution in developing students' social and emotional potential so that they are able to learn more effectively.

The results of interviews with teachers revealed that a friendly school environment has a positive impact on students' enthusiasm for learning. The teacher stated, "When the classroom is creatively decorated and the teacher uses interesting learning methods, students are more motivated to actively learn." (Interview, T, 2024). Another teacher said the same thing, who added that a clean classroom and supportive discussion activities help students focus more on learning. On the other hand, interviews show that they feel more comfortable and confident when the school atmosphere feels warm. Students said, "I feel happy coming to school because the teachers are friendly and always supportive of us." (Interview, S, 2024). Another student added that facilities such as a study park and a comfortable reading room make learning activities more enjoyable.

The data shows a correlation between efforts to create a friendly school environment and increased student comfort and motivation to learn. Teachers who use creative approaches and well-designed learning spaces make a significant contribution to the student learning experience. In addition, students feel more welcome and valued in an inclusive atmosphere. This strengthens the importance of environmental factors in supporting the implementation of GSM at SMPN 3 Bondowoso.

A friendly and pleasant school environment plays an important role in supporting the success of the Fun School Movement (GSM). Schools that prioritize aesthetic classroom management, adequate facilities, and a humanistic approach create a sense of belonging and comfort for students, which fosters emotional involvement with the learning process. This approach not only increases students' motivation to learn but also encourages positive emotional states, which are essential for effective learning. Teachers' creative strategies and the use of well-designed learning spaces directly affect students' enthusiasm and focus, while students themselves report feeling more confident and valued in a warm and inclusive atmosphere.

The results of the interviews show that the involvement of all elements of the school in creating a friendly and fun atmosphere is the key to GSM's success. Teachers play a central role by creating positive interactions and encouraging active student participation. Meanwhile, supporting school facilities, such as reading rooms and learning gardens, play a role in providing space for students to study independently or in groups. This data confirms that a holistic approach involving physical and social aspects can improve students' emotional well-being, so that they are more motivated to learn.

The Role of Teachers as Emotional Companions

The role of teachers as emotional companions has a great influence on the success of the Fun School Movement (GSM). Teachers are not only tasked with delivering the subject matter, but also play a role in understanding and helping students overcome emotional challenges. At SMPN 3 Bondowoso, this program is supported through socialization to all elements of the school to ensure mutual awareness of the importance of emotional assistance. Teachers who are actively involved in this program show that a good emotional relationship between teachers and students creates a conducive environment for learning, increases self-confidence, and builds positive social relationships.

Documentation shows how teacher-student interactions take place in a school environment. In a class session, it was seen that the teacher started learning with ice-breaking to create a relaxed atmosphere. Teachers also provide opportunities for students to share stories or experiences before starting the core material. Outside the classroom, teachers seem to actively interact with students in the field, ask how they are doing, and provide personal motivation. This approach

creates a welcoming and supportive school atmosphere, where students feel valued not only for their academic achievements, but also for their existence as individuals.



Figure 1. Socialization of the Fun School Movement Program

Documentation as shown in Figure 1 which describes the socialization activities of the Fun School Movement program emphasizes that the role of teachers as emotional companions is very important for students. Teachers not only help students solve emotional problems, but also provide encouragement to face challenges inside and outside of school. The socialization of this program ensures that all teachers have the same understanding of the importance of their role as emotional companions. With this approach, students feel accepted, valued, and motivated to perform better.

Interpretation of the data showed that the emotional approach by teachers created a closer relationship between students and teachers. When students feel that teachers care about their well-being, they are more open to sharing problems and receiving guidance. Teachers who are trained to recognize and respond to students' emotional needs play a crucial role in creating an emotionally safe environment. The program also strengthens teachers' ability to create a classroom atmosphere that supports collaborative and inclusive learning.

Parent Involvement in Supporting Student Well-Being

Findings: GSM engages parents in a variety of fun school activities, such as parent-student group discussions or family days. This involvement strengthens the relationship between students, families, and schools, which contributes to students' emotional stability.

Parent involvement is one of the key factors in supporting student welfare, as implemented through the Fun School Movement (GSM) at SMPN 3 Bondowoso. The program creates a space for parents to participate in fun school activities, such as parent-student group discussions, family days, and educational seminars. This involvement not only strengthens the connection between students, families, and schools, but also provides emotional stability for students. Through this collaboration, students feel comprehensively supported both from the school environment and their families.

The results of the observations revealed that parental involvement in school activities created a significant positive effect on students. In the group discussion, it was seen how students were more confident to talk about their aspirations and challenges because they felt supported by both parties, school and family. During family day activities, interactions between students, teachers, and parents create a more harmonious relationship. This not only strengthens interpersonal relationships but also increases students' sense of security to express and learn. As shown in Table 2, the following is an overview of the results of observations of parental

involvement in the implementation of the program.

Table 2. Parent Involvement

Observation Activities	Key findings	Impact on Students
Parent-student group discussion	Parents actively share experiences and provide input on problems faced by students.	Students feel more supported and have the courage to express their aspirations and challenges.
Family Day	Harmonious interaction between students, teachers, and parents in various recreational activities.	Improves the emotional connection between students and parents, and fosters a sense of comfort at school.
Educational seminars for parents	Parents receive information and training on how to support children at home through an emotional approach.	Parents better understand the emotional needs of students, creating a supportive home environment.
Informal activities	Teachers, students, and parents often have small discussions about students' daily lives outside of official forums.	Students feel cared for and have a closer relationship with school and family.

Parental involvement in school activities creates a significant positive effect on students. In the group discussion, it was seen how students were more confident to talk about their aspirations and challenges because they felt supported by both parties, school and family. During family day activities, interactions between students, teachers, and parents create a more harmonious relationship. This not only strengthens interpersonal relationships but also increases students' sense of security to express and learn.

Parent involvement not only improves student well-being but also creates a sense of belonging to the school. When parents are active in school activities, students see that they have the full support of the surrounding environment. This strengthens the emotional connection between students and their families and teachers, which in turn supports their emotional stability. Programs such as family days and group discussions are also a means to improve communication skills and cooperation between parents and teachers.

Discussion

The application of the principles of Fun School Movements at SMPN 3 Bondowoso contributes significantly to the creation of a friendly and fun school environment. Such an environment not only encourages students to be more emotionally involved in the learning process, but also increases their comfort and motivation to learn (Mokhtar et al., 2023; Feiyue, 2022). The aesthetic classroom arrangement, the use of creative learning methods, and the humanistic approach by teachers have proven to strengthen the sense of acceptance and appreciation among students. The researcher noted that the existence of supporting facilities such as a study park and a comfortable reading room also plays an important role in creating a conducive learning atmosphere, so that students feel more motivated and confident (Acharya & Sigdel, 2024). This analysis confirms that a holistic effort in creating a supportive physical and social environment is critical in maximizing the effectiveness of the Fun School Movement (GSM).

The results of this study are in line with the findings of several relevant journals. Several studies show that a friendly learning atmosphere increases students' emotional involvement in the learning process. Similar findings were also expressed by Vila et al. (2021), who stated that an inclusive and supportive school environment can increase students' confidence. In addition, research by Kartol (2023) highlights the importance of a well-designed study space in improving students' focus and concentration. Positive interactions between teachers and students have a direct impact on students' emotional well-being. Thus, the results of the research at SMPN 3

Bondowoso not only provide empirical evidence of the importance of a friendly school environment, but also strengthen the findings of various previous studies.

Be consistent with a wide range of relevant studies. Robichaux et al. (2022) highlighted that emotional support from teachers improves overall student well-being. Gregory et al. (2021) showed that the role of teachers in accompanying students emotionally has a positive impact on learning motivation. In addition, a study by Dyson et al. (2021) revealed that interactions based on empathy between teachers and students can increase students' sense of security and confidence. Emotional guidance provided by teachers has a long-term effect on students' social and emotional development. Thus, this study reinforces the finding that teachers have a crucial role in supporting students' emotional health in schools.

The role of teachers as emotional companions at SMPN 3 Bondowoso has contributed greatly to the success of the Fun School Movement (GSM). Teachers who are trained in accompanying students emotionally are able to create a supportive learning environment, where students feel heard, valued, and supported in the face of emotional challenges. This approach not only boosts students' self-confidence, but also strengthens positive social relationships in the school environment. The socialization and training provided to teachers ensures they have the necessary skills to recognize and respond to students' emotional needs, thus creating a safe and conducive atmosphere for learning ((Gregory et al., 2021; Maoulida et al., 2023). Emotional mentoring by teachers strengthens students' motivation and encourages their involvement in the learning process, ultimately contributing to their academic and social success.

The involvement of parents in school activities through the Fun School Movement (GSM) at SMPN 3 Bondowoso makes an important contribution to the welfare of students. Parents' participation in group discussions, family days, and educational seminars strengthens the relationship between students, families, and schools, ultimately creating emotional stability for students (Chung & Park, 2024; Dyson et al., 2021; Zaini, 2023; Zuhdi et al., 2024). Researchers note that through the active involvement of parents, students feel more supported and confident in expressing their aspirations and challenges. These activities also increase students' sense of security and comfort at school, as harmonious interactions between teachers, students, and parents create a supportive environment for their social and emotional development. Collaboration between schools and families through GSM not only strengthens students' emotional support, but also builds a greater sense of belonging to the school, which contributes to their stability and motivation to learn.

The results of this study are in line with various previous studies. Kamei and Harriott (2021) asserts that parental involvement in children's education improves their achievement and emotional well-being. Ali et al. (2024) found that collaboration between schools and families has a positive impact on students' social development. Effective communication between parents and teachers strengthens the family-school relationship that is essential for student success (Obeidat et al., 2024; Gregory et al., 2021). Tuomi (2022) also highlighted the importance of family ecosystems in supporting child development, which is consistent with the findings at SMPN 3 Bondowoso. Thus, the involvement of parents in GSM proves its effectiveness in supporting students' welfare comprehensively.

The implementation of Fun School Movements (GSM) at SMPN 3 Bondowoso significantly enhances the socio-emotional well-being of students by creating a supportive and enjoyable school environment. The aesthetic classroom arrangements, creative teaching methods, and humanistic approach by teachers foster a sense of acceptance and emotional engagement among students. Emotional support from teachers, who act as mentors, has been found to improve students' confidence, motivation, and social relationships. Furthermore, the active involvement of parents

through various school activities strengthens the emotional stability and sense of security of students. The collaboration between the school and families within the GSM framework is essential in creating an inclusive and nurturing atmosphere, which not only supports students' emotional and social development but also motivates them to excel academically. These findings align with previous studies, confirming that a holistic approach involving both the school environment and familial involvement is crucial for fostering students' overall well-being and success.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that a pleasant school environment plays an important role in improving student welfare at SMPN 3 Bondowoso. A conducive environment, with supporting facilities and a positive atmosphere, has a significant impact on students' comfort and motivation to learn. In addition, the role of teachers as emotional companions has proven effective in helping students overcome personal and academic problems, creating a sense of security and protection. Parental involvement also has a major contribution in supporting student welfare, especially in maintaining close relationships between schools and families. However, this study has limitations in the limited scope of the location at SMPN 3 Bondowoso, so the findings may not fully represent the conditions of other schools. Further research with a wider and more varied sample is expected to provide more comprehensive insights regarding this matter.

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