

## The Implementation of the Fun School Movement (GSM) in Moral Education at MI Soebono Mantofani, Tangerang

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### Abstract

This study examines the implementation of the Fun School Movement (*Gerakan Sekolah Menyenangkan/GSM*) in moral education at MI Soebono Mantofani, South Tangerang. Using a qualitative case study design, data were collected through classroom and school-environment observations, semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders (school leaders, teachers, students, and parents), and document analysis. The findings indicate that GSM is implemented as a school-wide cultural orientation emphasizing emotional safety, student participation, and supportive learning routines. A central operational feature is the use of thematic classroom zones that function as routine reference points to structure interaction and reinforce moral habituation. The Emotional Zone supports attention to students' readiness before learning, while Attendance and Aspiration Zones reinforce discipline routines and future orientation; the Goodness Zone provides moral reminders linked to everyday behavior. Teachers and parents perceived moral education as integrated into daily practice through habituation, teacher modeling, and value consistency across school and home contexts. The study suggests that GSM supports moral education by translating values into visible and repeated classroom routines, sustained through leadership commitment and parental involvement.

**Keywords:** *Fun School Movement (GSM); Moral Education; Habituation; Classroom Zones; Islamic Elementary School*

### Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji penerapan Gerakan Sekolah Menyenangkan (GSM) dalam pendidikan akhlak di MI Soebono Mantofani, Tangerang Selatan. Penelitian menggunakan desain studi kasus kualitatif. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi kelas dan lingkungan sekolah, wawancara semi-terstruktur dengan pemangku kepentingan utama (pimpinan sekolah, guru, siswa, dan orang tua), serta analisis dokumen. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa GSM diterapkan sebagai orientasi budaya sekolah yang menekankan keamanan emosional, partisipasi peserta didik, dan rutinitas belajar yang suportif. Salah satu fitur operasional utama adalah penggunaan zona-zona tematik di kelas yang berfungsi sebagai rujukan rutinitas untuk menata interaksi dan memperkuat pembiasaan nilai. Zona Emosi mendukung perhatian terhadap kesiapan peserta didik sebelum pembelajaran, sedangkan Zona Kehadiran dan Zona Harapan memperkuat pembiasaan disiplin dan orientasi masa depan; Zona Kebaikan menjadi pengingat nilai yang dikaitkan dengan perilaku sehari-hari. Guru dan orang tua memandang pendidikan akhlak terintegrasi dalam praktik harian melalui pembiasaan, keteladanan guru, dan konsistensi nilai antara sekolah dan rumah. Penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa GSM

mendukung pendidikan akhlak melalui penerjemahan nilai ke dalam rutinitas kelas yang tampak dan berulang, dengan dukungan kepemimpinan sekolah dan keterlibatan orang tua.

**Kata Kunci:** Gerakan Sekolah Menyenangkan (Gsm); Pendidikan Akhlak; Pembiasaan; Zona Kelas; Madrasah Ibtidaiyah

## **A. Introduction**

Moral education is a central dimension of schooling, particularly amid rapid social change that influences children's behavior and peer interaction. In many school contexts, concerns such as bullying, weakening empathy, and increasing individualism are frequently discussed as indicators that learning cannot focus solely on cognitive achievement, but must also strengthen ethical reasoning and character development.<sup>1</sup> At the same time, many learning environments still show limited child-friendly orientation. Teacher-centered instruction, excessive academic pressure, and discipline practices that pay insufficient attention to students' emotional well-being can reduce engagement and increase learning anxiety.<sup>2</sup> These conditions strengthen the need for educational approaches that are safe, inclusive, and responsive to children's developmental needs.

Responding to these challenges, the Fun School Movement (*Gerakan Sekolah Menyenangkan/GSM*) has been widely discussed as an educational initiative that encourages schools to become joyful, safe, and meaningful learning spaces. GSM emphasizes a shift in stakeholders' awareness—teachers, school leaders, and parents—that schools should not merely transfer knowledge, but also cultivate learners' well-being, autonomy, and resilience.<sup>3</sup> In practice, GSM encourages schools to build positive school culture, supportive teacher–student relationships, and learning experiences that students perceive as meaningful. Within this approach, the learning environment is treated as part of pedagogy: not only a physical

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<sup>1</sup> Herlina, Arismunandar, and Ismail Tolla, "Education Character in the Era of Globalization: Facing the Challenges of the Modern World," *International Journal of Engineering, Science and Information Technology* 4, no. 4 (2024): 230–36, <https://doi.org/10.52088/ijesty.v4i4.649>; Muhamad Ramdani, Aceng Kosasih, and Mulyana Abdullah, "Nilai-Nilai Pendidikan Akhlak Dalam QS. Al-Mujadalah Ayat 11 Dan Implikasinya Terhadap Pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam," *At-Tajdid : Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pemikiran Islam* 8, no. 2 (December 8, 2024): 616, <https://doi.org/10.24127/att.v8i2.3711>; Mohammad Fadil Muktasim Billah, Endah Tri Wisudaningsih, and Roby Firmandil Diharjo, "Penerapan Pendidikan Karakter Kemandirian Dan Kepedulian Sosial Santri Di Pondok Pesantren Zainul Hasan Genggong.," *Pendekar: Jurnal Pendidikan Berkarakter* 5, no. 2 (July 28, 2022): 91, <https://doi.org/10.31764/pendekar.v5i2.9961>.

<sup>2</sup> Apriyanti Widiansyah, Rahmat Saputra, and Fifit Fitriansyah, "Sosialisasi Dan Advokasi Pemenuhan Hak-Hak Anak Melalui Sekolah Ramah Anak Di SDN Setiajaya 02 Cabang Bungin Bekasi," *JURNAL KREATIVITAS PENGABDIAN KEPADA MASYARAKAT (PKM)* 5, no. 10 (October 1, 2022): 3334–53, <https://doi.org/10.33024/jkpm.v5i10.7241>; Reni Sasmita and Wantini Wantini, "Sekolah Ramah Anak Dalam Teori Belajar Humanistik Perspektif Psikologi Pendidikan Islam," *FOUNDASIA* 14, no. 1 (April 1, 2023): 1–13, <https://doi.org/10.21831/foundasia.v14i1.57680>.

<sup>3</sup> Dr. H. A. Zaki Mubarak, *Sistem Pendidikan Di Negeri Kangguru: Studi Komparatif Australia Dan Indonesia, Zakimu* (Depok: Ganding Pustaka, 2019).

arrangement, but also a social climate that supports participation, creativity, and psychological safety.<sup>4</sup>

In Islamic educational contexts, moral education (akhlak) is central because character formation is expected to be reflected in daily conduct, not only in conceptual understanding. Islamic moral education highlights habituation, role modeling (uswah), and consistent practice as key mechanisms for internalizing values such as honesty, discipline, responsibility, empathy, and social care.<sup>5</sup> However, a recurring challenge is the gap between moral ideals promoted in school discourse and students' everyday behavior, which often reflects limitations in school culture and learning routines.<sup>6</sup>

Although GSM has been discussed in relation to joyful learning and school culture, there is still limited description of how GSM routines, particularly the use of thematic “zones”, operate as concrete habituation mechanisms for moral education in Islamic elementary schooling. This study addresses that focus by examining GSM implementation at MI Soebono Mantofani, South Tangerang, with attention to: (1) how GSM is enacted at the school-wide level, (2) how GSM zones are used in daily learning routines, and (3) how teachers and parents perceive the integration of moral values within these practices. By clarifying these mechanisms, this study offers a contextual account of how joyful learning initiatives may be aligned with Islamic moral education through everyday habituation.

## B. Research Methods

This study used a qualitative approach with a case study design to examine how the Fun School Movement (*Gerakan Sekolah Menyenangkan*/GSM) is enacted in everyday school practices and how moral values are integrated through those practices in a single institutional setting. The study was conducted at MI Soebono Mantofani, South Tangerang, selected because the school has adopted GSM principles and operationalizes them through routine practices and classroom-based activities relevant to moral education. Participants included the school

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<sup>4</sup> Wahyudi, “Program Gerakan Sekolah Menyenangkan ( GSM ) Dalam Menumbuhkembangkan Karakter Siswa ( Study Kasus Di MIN 3 Tangerang Selatan)” (UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, 2022); Alfiah Khoiriah Siregar, “Pengembangan Projek Penguatan Profil Pelajar Pancasila Dan Profil Pelajar Rahmatallil’alamin (P5PPRA) Melalui Gerakan Sekolah Menyenangkan (GSM) Pada Madrasah Tsanawiyah Negeri 1 Padang Lawas” (UIN Syekh Ali Hasan Ahmad Addary Padangsidimpuan., 2024), <http://etd.uinsyahada.ac.id/12064/>.

<sup>5</sup> Bucky Wibawa Karya Guna et al., “Building Morality and Ethics Through Islamic Religious Education in Schools,” *IJGIE (International Journal of Graduate of Islamic Education)* 5, no. 1 (February 9, 2024): 14–24, <https://doi.org/10.37567/ijgie.v5i1.2685>; Atiya Rustum and Zainab Moin, “Moral Training of Youth in the Light of Islam (An Insightful Approach),” *AL-DURAR* 4, no. 4 (2024): 19–34, <https://tcais.net/index.php/aldurar/article/view/243>.

<sup>6</sup> MIsbah Zulfa Elizabeth, Abdul Kholiq, and Syamsul Ma’arif, *School Culture Di Madrasah Dan Sekolah ( Penelitian Kolektif )* (Semarang: IAIN Walisongo, 2012).

principal, teachers, students, and parents, selected purposively based on their involvement in GSM implementation and its moral education practices. This sampling strategy was used to obtain information-rich perspectives on implementation processes and moral habituation activities within the school context.

Data were collected through classroom and school-environment observations, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis. Observations focused on daily routines, teacher–student interactions, classroom organization, and GSM-related habituation practices. Interviews explored participants’ experiences and perceptions of GSM implementation and the integration of moral values in learning activities. Documents reviewed included school programs and written materials relevant to GSM activities and moral education practices.

Data analysis followed an interactive process of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. During reduction, interview and observation data were organized and summarized by identifying recurring patterns related to GSM implementation and moral education practices. Data were then displayed in thematic categories to support comparison across sources and across techniques. Conclusions were drawn by linking themes to the study focus and continuously checking consistency across the triangulated data sources. To enhance trustworthiness, credibility was supported through triangulation across data sources and methods. Confirmability was supported by keeping systematic records of data collection and analysis steps, allowing the interpretation to be traced back to field evidence.

## **C. Results and Discussion**

### **1. Results**

To reflect the study focus stated in the introduction, the findings are organized into three interconnected areas: (1) school-wide enactment of GSM, (2) the use of GSM zones in daily routines, and (3) stakeholder perceptions of how moral values are integrated through these practices.

#### **a. School-Wide Enactment of GSM at MI Soebono Mantofani**

Findings indicate that GSM at MI Soebono Mantofani is enacted not only through classroom activities but also through school-wide routines that shape a shared learning climate. Observations in classroom and school environments suggested that teachers attempted to maintain a welcoming atmosphere by emphasizing comfort, positive interaction, and students’ participation. In this enactment, GSM was framed as a cultural approach: the school aimed to reduce the sense of learning as pressure and to strengthen students’ readiness to engage in daily activities.

Interviews highlighted leadership commitment as an enabling condition for GSM routines to function consistently. School leaders described GSM as beginning with a shift in mindset rather than an emphasis on facilities or infrastructure. This view was also echoed in the statement, “GSM works because we change our mindset first, not our facilities.” In daily practice, leadership was described as supporting teacher initiative, supervising implementation, and encouraging consistency in classroom routines aligned with GSM principles.

Another visible feature of school-wide enactment was parental participation. Interviews and documentation indicated that parents were involved in school activities and classroom arrangements, including classroom decoration and literacy-related activities. This involvement was described by participants as strengthening a sense of shared responsibility between home and school. In this context, GSM was presented not as a top-down program, but as a collective movement maintained through collaboration among school leaders, teachers, students, and parents.

#### **b. GSM Zones as Routines and Habituation Tools in Daily School Life**

A central operational feature of GSM implementation at MI Soebono Mantofani is the use of thematic classroom zones. The findings indicate that zones were used as routine reference points that structure classroom interaction and reinforce expected behaviors. Observations suggested that the zones were not treated merely as decorative displays; rather, teachers and students interacted with the zones as part of everyday learning and classroom management practices. The zones described in the school context included several thematic areas, such as emotional, attendance, aspiration, family, literacy, creativity, and goodness zones. The findings below focus on the zones most explicitly reflected in observation and interview accounts, particularly the emotional, attendance, aspiration, and goodness zones.

##### **1) Emotional Zone and emotional readiness**

Findings suggest that the Emotional Zone is used to recognize students’ emotional conditions before learning begins. Students placed name sticks according to their emotional states, and teachers used this as an early signal to respond to students’ readiness. Interviews suggested that teachers viewed this practice as helpful for sustaining classroom flow, because learning activities were adjusted when students appeared emotionally unsettled. The Emotional Zone therefore functioned as a routine mechanism that legitimizes emotional awareness as part of learning preparation.

##### **2) Attendance Zone and discipline routines.**

The Attendance Zone was used as a routine tool to reinforce punctuality and responsibility. Observations indicated that students’ presence and punctuality were publicly

tracked, which created a classroom norm about being on time. Teachers described this practice not as punitive discipline but as habituation through visible reminders and repeated routines. In this sense, discipline was framed as a shared expectation embedded in daily classroom life rather than enforced solely through sanctions.

### **3) Aspiration Zone and future orientation**

Findings indicate that the Aspiration Zone provided a space for students to articulate personal goals and connect daily learning to future aspirations. Teachers described that students frequently revisited aspiration boards, which served as reminders of personal ambitions. Students' comments in interviews also reflected that the zone was perceived as motivating and meaningful. In this way, the zone functioned as a routine prompt for self-reflection and goal orientation.

### **4) Goodness Zone and moral reminders**

The Goodness Zone was described as a classroom reference point for reinforcing positive conduct. Observations suggested that teachers linked classroom interaction—such as respectful communication, cooperation, and helping peers—to the moral reminders displayed in the zone. Rather than being presented as abstract moral instruction, the Goodness Zone served as a practical cue that teachers used to connect daily behavior with character values. The findings suggest that GSM zones operate as routine structures that make moral and emotional dimensions visible in everyday learning. The zones provided “anchors” for repeated practices—checking emotional readiness, tracking discipline, reminding aspirations, and reinforcing goodness—so that character education is embedded in daily classroom interaction.

### **c. Stakeholder Perceptions of Moral Integration within GSM Practices**

Findings indicate that teachers and parents perceived moral education as being integrated into GSM routines through habituation, teacher modeling, and consistent reinforcement across settings. Teachers described moral education not as a separate lesson delivered only through explanation, but as values practiced in classroom norms, routines, and interaction patterns. Observations supported this by indicating that moral values were often conveyed through everyday actions—such as the use of respectful language, cooperative classroom tasks, and reminders linked to classroom zones—rather than through lecture-style delivery alone.

#### **1) Teacher modeling and classroom interaction**

Teachers were described as central actors in moral habituation through example. Observations indicated that students frequently mirrored teachers' polite language and cooperative behavior during routine activities. Teachers also emphasized consistency,

suggesting that repeated patterns of interaction and reminders are necessary for values to become part of students' daily habits.

## 2) Parents' reinforcement and value consistency

Parents described their involvement as supporting consistency between school and home values. Interviews indicated that parents perceived better alignment between what students practiced at school and what was reinforced at home. One parent stated, "School and home now speak the same moral language." This perception suggests that parental engagement was seen not only as logistical support (e.g., classroom activities), but also as moral reinforcement that strengthens continuity of values.

Across stakeholder accounts, the moral values most frequently identified as being reinforced through GSM-related routines included discipline, honesty, responsibility, empathy, and social care. The findings therefore suggest that GSM implementation at MI Soebono Mantofani is perceived as enabling moral education to operate through daily habituation—supported by teacher example, routine structures (zones), and parental reinforcement—rather than being limited to conceptual instruction.

## 2. Discussion

The findings suggest that GSM implementation at MI Soebono Mantofani operates as a contextual framework that connects joyful learning with moral habituation in everyday school life. In this case, "fun" is not presented as entertainment or occasional activities, but as a deliberate reorientation of classroom climate toward emotional safety, student participation, and supportive routines. This perspective strengthens prior arguments that child-friendly environments support students' engagement and learning readiness, which in turn provides a more conducive foundation for moral and social development.<sup>7</sup> What this study adds is a concrete description of how that foundation is enacted within an Islamic elementary school setting, where moral education is expected to be visible in daily conduct rather than confined to conceptual instruction.

A key analytical contribution of this study lies in clarifying the function of GSM zones as habituation mechanisms rather than symbolic classroom displays. In line with Mubarak's<sup>8</sup> argument that environmental structuring can act as a behavioral cue, the zones in this case

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<sup>7</sup> Sri Maryani, "Manajemen Gerakan Sekolah Menyenangkan Di SMKN 1 Jambu Kabupaten Semarang," *Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan (JMP)* 11, no. 3 (July 3, 2023), <https://doi.org/10.26877/jmp.v11i3.14930>; Indah Krisnamurti and Salamah Salamah, "Implementasi Gerakan Sekolah Menyenangkan Dalam Meningkatkan Inovasi Pembelajaran Guru SD," *Proceedings Series on Social Sciences & Humanities* 3 (June 1, 2022): 275–82, <https://doi.org/10.30595/pssh.v3i.390>.

<sup>8</sup> Mubarak, *Sistem Pendidikan Di Negeri Kangguru: Studi Komparatif Australia Dan Indonesia*.

functioned as routine “anchors” that make expectations visible and repeatedly accessible in daily interaction. The Emotional Zone supported teachers’ attention to students’ readiness before learning, while Attendance and Aspiration Zones structured discipline routines and future orientation. This suggests that moral education becomes more tangible when values are translated into repeated micro-practices—checking emotional states, tracking punctuality, revisiting aspirations, and recalling “goodness” as a behavioral reference—so that students encounter moral cues as part of ordinary classroom life. This mechanism also helps explain why GSM is often described by participants as a mindset shift: the emphasis is not on adding new content, but on reorganizing routines so that moral and emotional dimensions are consistently integrated into how learning is managed.

From the perspective of Islamic education, the findings reinforce the importance of habituation (*ta’wid*) and role modeling (*uswah*) as mechanisms of moral formation. Teachers’ emphasis on consistency, daily routines, and example aligns with Islamic educational perspectives that view character as formed through repeated practice within a supportive environment.<sup>9</sup> In this study, GSM routines appear to provide a practical structure through which moral values—discipline, honesty, responsibility, empathy, and social care—are enacted and reinforced through interaction patterns, not merely communicated as norms. This supports the view that education is fundamentally a moral practice when values are lived in ordinary school life.<sup>10</sup> Accordingly, GSM can be interpreted as a practical pathway that translates the moral aims of Islamic education into visible routines, helping reduce the common gap between moral ideals and everyday behavior noted in school culture discussions.<sup>11</sup>

Parental involvement emerged as an enabling condition that strengthened the continuity of moral messages across school and home contexts. This supports the argument that character education becomes more sustainable when values are shared and reinforced by multiple stakeholders rather than being left solely to classroom instruction.<sup>12</sup> Practically, the case suggests that GSM implementation benefits from (1) leadership support that maintains

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<sup>9</sup> Bucky Wibawa Karya Guna et al., “Building Morality and Ethics Through Islamic Religious Education in Schools”; Rustum and Moin, “Moral Training of Youth in the Light of Islam (An Insightful Approach).”

<sup>10</sup> Richard Pring, “Education as a Moral Practice,” in *The RoutledgeFalmer Reader in Philosophy of Education* (Routledge, 2021), 195–205, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003209317-21>.

<sup>11</sup> Elizabeth, Kholiq, and Ma’arif, *School Culture Di Madrasah Dan Sekolah (Penelitian Kolektif)*.

<sup>12</sup> Samsul Bahri, “Urgensi Peran Keluarga, Sekolah, Dan Masyarakat Dalam Menanamkan Nilai Akhlak Peserta Didik,” *JURNAL AL-QAYYIMAH* 5, no. 2 (December 16, 2022): 121–39, <https://doi.org/10.30863/aqym.v5i2.682>; Aulia Herawati, Ulil Devia Ningrum, and Herlini Puspika Sari, “Wahyu Sebagai Sumber Utama Kebenaran Dalam Pendidikan Islam: Kajian Kritis Terhadap Implementasinya Di Era Modern,” *Moral: Jurnal Kajian Pendidikan Islam* 1, no. 4 (November 22, 2024): 109–26, <https://doi.org/10.61132/moral.v1i4.229>.

consistency, (2) teacher readiness to treat routines as pedagogical instruments, and (3) parental engagement that reinforces school norms at home. However, as a single-site case study, this research does not claim generalized causal effects of GSM; instead, it offers a contextual account of practices and perceptions within one Islamic elementary school. Future research could strengthen the evidence base by comparing multiple sites and examining long-term sustainability of GSM-based moral habituation across different institutional contexts.

#### **D. Conclusion**

This study concludes that the implementation of the Fun School Movement (Gerakan Sekolah Menyenangkan/GSM) at MI Soebono Mantofani illustrates how joyful learning principles can be integrated with moral education through everyday school routines. The findings suggest that GSM practices—particularly the use of thematic classroom zones and routine-based interaction—support the habituation of moral values such as discipline, honesty, responsibility, empathy, and social care. Rather than positioning moral education as a separate or purely conceptual component of instruction, GSM in this case demonstrates how moral values can be embedded within daily classroom life through consistent routines, teacher modeling, and emotional awareness.

The study also highlights the importance of institutional conditions in supporting GSM-based moral habituation. Leadership commitment, teachers' shared understanding of GSM principles, and parental involvement emerged as enabling factors that helped maintain consistency across school practices and home reinforcement. These findings suggest that GSM is more likely to be sustained when it is understood not merely as a set of activities, but as a cultural and pedagogical orientation that reshapes how learning environments and routines are organized. However, this study is limited as a single-site case study based on observations and participants' perceptions within one Islamic elementary school. Therefore, the findings should be interpreted as a contextual description rather than as generalized causal claims about GSM effectiveness. Future research is recommended to examine GSM implementation across multiple schools and to explore the long-term sustainability of routine-based moral habituation in diverse educational settings.

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