

Teachers' Strategies for Building Inclusive Classroom Environments in Social Studies: A Case Study of a Rural Indonesian School

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ABSTRACT

While numerous studies have examined teachers' learning motivation and classroom management, limited research has focused on how educators foster inclusive classroom environments in rural contexts. This study investigates how teachers promote student motivation, comfort, and non-violence in Social Studies classrooms at a rural Junior High School in Siberut Utara, Mentawai Regency, West Sumatra, Indonesia. A qualitative case study approach was employed. Participants included two Social Sciences teachers across grades VII–IX and 26 students. Data were collected through direct classroom observations over nine sessions and semi-structured interviews with both teachers and selected students. Thematic analysis was used to identify key strategies implemented by teachers. Findings revealed that teachers enhanced student motivation using positive reinforcement, culturally relevant materials, and interactive teaching methods. To create a comfortable learning environment, teachers emphasized mutual respect, acknowledged cultural diversity, and offered emotional support. Strategies to reduce classroom violence included establishing clear behavioral expectations, integrating conflict resolution into the curriculum, and promoting inclusive dialogue during lessons. The study underscores the importance of contextually responsive teaching strategies in rural schools. By aligning pedagogy with students' lived experiences and cultural backgrounds, teachers can foster a more inclusive, respectful, and effective learning environment. These findings provide valuable insights for educators working in similar rural contexts, enabling them to adopt inclusive strategies that support student engagement, emotional well-being, and positive classroom behavior.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Inclusivity in education is not only related to providing a safe and comfortable learning space for all students, but also includes the appreciation of individual diversity within the learning community (Friska, 2023). In the context of Social Studies (IPS) learning, an inclusive environment has a strategic

role. IPS aims to develop critical thinking, social skills, and awareness of cultural diversity, values, and norms in society. Therefore, creating an inclusive learning environment is an important prerequisite to achieving these goals.

Effective learning can only occur when students feel safe, valued, and motivated to participate actively (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014; Ryan & Deci, 2020). A positive and violence-free classroom environment encourages students to ask questions, discuss, and collaborate in building their understanding. This is in line with the Socio-Constructivism theory proposed by Vygotsky in 1978, which emphasises that learning occurs through social interaction between students and teachers or peers (Akpan, et al., 2020). In this context, an inclusive environment becomes the main foundation for students to build understanding through collaboration and dialogue.

However, significant challenges are still faced in efforts to create inclusive classroom environments, especially in rural areas of Indonesia. Verbal and non-verbal violence often hinders students from actively participating in learning. Research by Diani et al. (2022) shows that verbal violence in coastal schools, both among students and between students and teachers, is often caused by internal factors (students' language experience and lack of parental education) and external factors (social environment and local cultural habits). Additionally, Lo (2024) identified various forms of violence committed by teachers, such as physical, psychological, verbal, and professional violence. These practices not only make students feel uncomfortable but also hinder their learning process.

Furthermore, several scholars have implemented various strategies to motivate students to learn Educational Psychology, English, and Science subjects in Elementary and Junior High Schools (Indriyah et al., 2021; Jasrial et al., 2021; Mitchell et al., 2017; Motevalli et al., 2020; Radil et al., 2023; Rahmawati & Sholeh, 2021; Zainuddin & Hardiansyah, 2023). They reported that students' motivation is enhanced by using various authentic strategies (e.g., providing rewards, student self-regulated learning), varying teaching methods, and creating contextual learning materials. However, the effectiveness of these strategies seems unable to be applied to the reality of Social Studies education in rural schools, which have unique characteristics and challenges.

This problem becomes more complex when viewed in the context of Social Studies education in rural schools. Students in remote areas often face several obstacles, such as a lack of access to learning resources (Carrete-Marín et al., 2024), technology (Pratiwi & Gading, 2023), teacher guidance (Liu et al., 2022), low student self-confidence (Astalini et al., 2020), and a less supportive learning culture (Rusdiana, 2015). For example, at SMPN 3 North Siberut, Mentawai Islands Regency, West Sumatra Province, limited infrastructure and teaching resources hinder the implementation of innovative and student-centred learning approaches (Jasrial et al., 2023).

Based on the problems and previous research mentioned above, there are still limitations in research in terms of exploring unique rural contexts with different characteristics. This gap becomes more significant when considering Social Studies learning in rural junior high schools, where geographical, social, linguistic, and cultural factors often exacerbate learning problems. Therefore, this study aims to explore the strategies used by teachers in building an inclusive classroom environment in Social Studies learning in rural schools, particularly at SMPN 3 North Siberut. Focusing on the rural context provides novelty, as previous research tends to focus more on urban environments. The results of this study are expected to provide valuable insights into the mechanisms that teachers can use to create a positive, safe, and inclusive learning atmosphere. Additionally, these findings are also expected to contribute to the development of more humanistic and inclusive educational policies, in line with the principles of (Al-Shammari, 2021). Through this study, it is hoped that practical strategies can be found that can be implemented by teachers in rural areas to create a classroom environment that supports inclusive and student-success-oriented learning. The research questions in this study are as follows:

1. What strategies do teachers use to motivate students in Social Studies learning in a rural classroom environment?

2. What strategies do teachers use to create a comfortable and safe learning atmosphere in Social Studies learning in a rural classroom environment?
3. What strategies do teachers use to prevent potential violence in Social Studies learning?

2. METHOD

2.1. Research Design

This study employed a case study design using a qualitative approach. This design was chosen because it allows for an in-depth exploration of how teachers at SMPN 3 Siberut Utara created an inclusive (motivated students and feel comfortable) and free-violent classroom environment in a natural setting. Also, this design enabled the researcher to examine real-life practices, challenges, and interactions without manipulating the environment, making it suitable for understanding teacher-student dynamics in a rural school context. Creswell (2017) argues that a case study provides a holistic understanding and in-depth examination of a single study. So, this design captured the unique socio-cultural and educational factors influencing inclusivity and student motivation. This design also supported data triangulation through interviews and classroom observations, ensuring a richer and more reliable analysis.

2.2. Setting and Participants

This study was conducted at SMPN 3 Siberut Utara, Mentawai Regency, West Sumatra Province. This school was chosen because it is located in Sotboyak Village, which is far from the capital cities of Siberut Utara District (Muara Sikabalan), Mentawai Regency (Tua Pejat), and West Sumatra Province (Padang). This geographical condition presented a unique challenge for teachers and students accessing quality education, including building an inclusive and violence-free classroom environment.

The participants of this study were two teachers who taught Social Studies in Grades VII, VIII, and IX. Each grade consisted of one class. Moreover, this study involved all students in all grades. Teacher A taught grade VII with ten students, and teacher B taught grade VIII with seven students and grade IX with nine students. Due to the small population size and the school's remote location, this study follows the theory of Gravetter and Wallnau (2013) who state that when the population size is small, a census is often the most appropriate method to ensure that all members are included in the study. Thus, this study employed a total sampling or census approach. The students in this school come from various ethnic backgrounds, including Mentawai, Minangkabau, Nias, Batak, and Malay, each with distinct cultural characteristics and mother tongues. This diversity could influence classroom dynamics. According to Yang et al. (2010), group and individual differences among students significantly impact learning, as each ethnic group brings unique values, norms, and communication styles. Therefore, teachers must understand and appreciate this diversity to create an inclusive and harmonious learning environment.

2.3. Data Collection

The researcher conducted direct classroom observations to examine how teachers motivate students to actively participate in the learning process, create a comfortable learning environment, and ensure that no verbal or non-verbal violence occurs. The researcher sat in the back of the classroom while recording the activities in the classes. Also, the researcher used a field note to note the teachers' strategies. Observations were conducted nine times, with each class observed three times during 90-minute sessions. The researcher took notes and recorded the strategies implemented by the teacher throughout the learning process.

In addition, semi-structured interviews were conducted with two teachers and ten selected students. For the interviews with students, a purposive sampling technique was used, considering ethnic diversity and grade levels. Students were selected based on their experiences in classroom dynamics and intercultural interactions. A total of 10 students were interviewed, with an even distribution across grades VII, VIII, and IX, and representatives from various ethnic backgrounds. This selection aimed to gain in-depth insights into students' experiences in a diverse learning environment.

Each student interview lasted 10 minutes and was recorded using a mobile phone. The interviews with students focused on exploring factors that motivated them and made them feel comfortable during social studies lessons. Meanwhile, teacher interviews aimed to gather detailed information on the strategies they applied and the contexts in which they were used.

2.4. Data Analysis

The data collected from classroom observations and semi-structured interviews were analysed using a thematic analysis approach to identify key strategies used by teachers in motivating students, creating a comfortable learning environment, and ensuring a violence-free classroom during Social Studies lessons at SMPN 3 Siberut Utara, following Christou (2023). Thematic analysis was chosen as the primary data analysis technique because it directly aligns with the research objective of identifying and understanding the key strategies used by teachers to foster an inclusive learning environment (motivating students to learn, feeling comfortable, and without experiencing violence). This approach provides a flexible yet rigorous method for exploring the rich textual data obtained from classroom observations and semi-structured interviews, enabling the identification of recurring patterns and themes. The thematic analysis also allows researchers to delve deeply into the nuances and complexities of the data, which is essential for understanding the experiences of teachers and students.

The steps included: First, the observational data, including field notes and recorded classroom interactions, were transcribed and coded to categorise teacher strategies related to student motivation, inclusivity, and violence prevention. Patterns and recurring themes in teacher behaviours, classroom interactions, and student engagement were identified to understand how these strategies contributed to a positive learning atmosphere. Second, the interview data from teachers and students were transcribed, coded, and categorised based on emerging themes. Student responses were analysed to identify factors influencing their motivation and comfort in learning. In contrast, teacher responses were examined to uncover specific strategies and their implementation in various classroom situations. The researcher also compared teacher-reported strategies with observed classroom practices, ensuring consistency and depth in the findings. Finally, data triangulation was employed by cross-checking the findings from observations and interviews to increase reliability and validity. This analysis aimed to comprehensively understand how teachers foster an inclusive, supportive, and violence-free learning environment in a rural school by integrating multiple data sources.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section provides the study results and discussions in the form of teachers' strategies and context of use presented in tables. Those included teachers' strategies in motivating students to actively participate during the teaching and learning process in Social Studies learning, 2) Teachers' strategies for making students comfortable in Social Studies learning, and 3) teachers' strategies for preventing violence in Social Studies learning.

3.1. Motivation Strategies

Motivating students is essential to make students active during the teaching and learning processes. This section provides teachers' strategies for motivating students to participate in social studies learning at the rural junior high school in Sotboyak Village, Siberut Utara District, Mentawai Regency. After analysing the data, the results are presented in the following table.

Table 1. Teachers' Strategies for Motivating Students in Social Studies Learning

No	Teachers' Strategies	Context of Use
1	Positive reinforcement	Teachers provide verbal praise, rewards, or encouragement when students participate in discussions or complete tasks. For example, A teacher says, "Great answer! That's a fascinating perspective."
2	Interactive teaching materials	Teachers use storytelling, role-playing, and simulations to make Social Studies topics engaging. For example, a historical event is reenacted through a role-play activity.
3	Real-life connections	Teachers relate lesson topics to students' daily lives to increase relevance. For example, when discussing trade, the teacher asks about students' experiences in local markets.
4	Student-centered discussions	Teachers encourage students to express opinions and engage in peer discussions. For example, a debate on the impact of deforestation in their region is organised.
5	Scaffolding and guided questions	Teachers provide hints and step-by-step guidance to help students answer questions confidently. For example, the teacher might ask, "What do you think happened after this event?" to guide students in making connections
6	Games	Teachers integrate educational games to make learning more enjoyable. For example, they conduct quiz competitions related to learning materials
7	Collaborative learning	Teachers assign group tasks to encourage teamwork and shared learning experiences. For example, students work in groups to create a poster on environmental conservation

Table 1 illustrates that teachers in rural schools used various teaching strategies in the Social Studies classrooms. These findings are also emphasised by students' statements in the interviews. Those statements are as follows;

"Saya senang kalau Ibu atau Bapak guru bilang jawaban saya bagus. Jadi, saya lebih berani menjawab pertanyaan lagi (I feel happy when the teacher says my answer is good. So, I become more confident to answer questions again." (Student 1)

"Kalau dapat pujian, rasanya semangat belajar. Apalagi kalau dapat hadiah kecil, tambah semangat (When I get praise, I feel more motivated to learn. Especially when I get a small reward, I feel even more excited." (Student 4)

"Kalau guru memberikan petunjuk, saya jadi lebih percaya diri untuk menjawab pertanyaan." ("If the teacher gives clues, I become more confident to answer questions)" (Student 8)

Based on the findings, strategies used by teachers to motivate students to learn Social Studies in rural schools included positive reinforcement, interactive materials, and student-centred discussions. These strategies are effective in enhancing student engagement, reflected in student statements that praise and small rewards increase their learning enthusiasm. The use of diverse and relevant methods in students' lives proves crucial in creating engaging and meaningful learning. It implies that these strategies emphasise students' engagement, interactivity, and contextual learning. These strategies, such as positive reinforcement, interactive materials, real-life connections, and collaborative learning, suggest that teachers prioritise active participation, critical thinking, and experiential learning to enhance students' comprehension and interest in the subject (Munna & Kalam, 2021; Shehu et al., 2024).

The findings also show that each strategy aims to foster student engagement. Arista et al. (2018) believe that positive reinforcement builds students' confidence and motivation, while interactive materials and real-life connections make abstract concepts more tangible. Student-centred discussions and scaffolding encourage analytical thinking. Games and collaborative learning create an enjoyable and cooperative classroom environment (Pan et al., 2021). These approaches collectively indicate a shift from traditional lecture-based methods to more dynamic, student-centred pedagogy.

Based on the findings, teachers' strategies in social studies align with constructivist and sociocultural learning theories. In this case, students construct knowledge through active participation and meaningful interactions. The use of real-life connections and interactive materials can be attributed to the need for relevance in learning, which enhances the retention and application of knowledge. Collaborative learning and discussions also emphasise 21st-century skills like communication, teamwork, and critical thinking. This study's results align with the previous research findings, particularly student-centred learning approaches, including scaffolding (Ciullo & Dimino, 2017), role-playing (Manan & Mastul, 2023), and discussions (Agustina et al., 2018), which significantly enhances students' comprehension and engagement. However, some previous studies suggest that teachers in specific educational contexts still rely on passive, textbook-based instruction (see Manan & Mastul, 2023)). In contrast, the present study's findings suggest a more progressive, student-centred instructional approach.

3.2. Comfort and Inclusive Strategies

Teachers should make students enjoy learning in classrooms to achieve learning goals. The problem in this study was teachers' strategies for making students comfortable learning Social Studies subjects in Sotboyak Village, Siberut Utara District, Mentawai Regency. After analysing the data, the results are presented in the following table.

Table 2. Teachers' Strategies for Making Students Comfortable in Social Studies Learning

No	Teachers' Strategies	Context of Use
1	Building positive teacher-student relationships	Teachers create a welcoming atmosphere by showing care and respect for students. For example, they greet students warmly and ask about their well-being before starting the lesson.
2	Encouraging Respect for Cultural and Linguistic Diversity	Teachers acknowledge students' different ethnic and language backgrounds, promoting inclusivity. For example, they allow students to express ideas in their mother tongue before translating them into Indonesian.
3	Creating a non-judgmental environment	Teachers assure students that their answers and opinions are valued. They avoid negative feedback and instead provide constructive criticism.
4	Flexible seating arrangements	Teachers allow students to sit where they feel most comfortable to enhance focus and participation. They also rearrange desks for group discussions or pair work.
5	Active listening and encouragement	Teachers listen attentively to students' thoughts and provide support, such as nodding, maintaining eye contact, and responding positively to student input.
6	Providing emotional support	Teachers offer encouragement to students who feel anxious or hesitant. Example: Reassuring a shy student before they present their work.
7	Using humour to reduce anxiety	Teachers incorporate light humour to make students feel at ease. Example: Telling a relevant joke or sharing a funny historical anecdote.
8	Providing clear instructions and expectations	Teachers give clear, structured guidance to prevent confusion. For example, explaining classroom activities step by step before starting

Table 2 demonstrates that teachers used various strategies to create a comfortable learning environment in Social Studies classrooms in rural schools, such as building positive relationships, encouraging inclusivity, reducing anxiety, and fostering emotional support. These are supported by the results of the interviews from students' perspectives.

"*Saya senang kalau Ibu atau Bapak guru menyapa kami sebelum pelajaran dimulai. Rasanya seperti diterima (I feel happy when the teacher greets us before the lesson starts. It feels like we are accepted)*" (Student 6)

"*Kalau guru tanya kabar kami, kami merasa diperhatikan.*" ("When the teacher asks how we are doing, we feel cared for)" (Student 8)

"*Saya merasa bangga kalau guru membiarkan kami berbicara dalam bahasa daerah kami. Jadi, kami merasa bahasa kami dihargai (I feel proud when the teacher lets us speak in our local language. So, we feel our language is valued)*" (Student 17)

"*Guru tidak pernah meremehkan perbedaan budaya kami. Itu membuat kami merasa nyaman (The teacher never belittles our cultural differences. That makes us feel comfortable)*" (Student 10)

"*Saya merasa didengar kalau guru melihat mata saya dan mengangguk (I feel heard when the teacher looks me in the eye and nods)*" (Student 15)

Based on the findings, the results indicate a shift toward student-centred pedagogy, emphasizing psychological safety and engagement in learning. The findings suggest that teachers prioritise emotional and social well-being alongside academic learning, recognising that a comfortable environment enhances student participation and motivation. Agustina et al. (2018), Cole et al. (2021), and Radil (2023) argue that strategies such as active listening, humour, and flexible seating reflect an effort to create a supportive and non-threatening classroom atmosphere where students feel valued and confident in expressing their ideas. This practice will help students be more likely to engage actively in learning, express their ideas confidently, and develop a positive attitude toward their studies.

These results align with Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, which emphasises the role of social interactions in learning (Grageda et al., 2022). When students feel emotionally secure and respected, they are more likely to engage in discussions and higher-order thinking (Australian Education Research Organisation, 2023; Flensner & Von der Lippe, 2019). Additionally, Zheng (2022) highlights that students must feel safe and supported before focusing on cognitive tasks, reinforcing the importance of these teacher strategies. The emphasis on emotional support and inclusivity may stem from a growing recognition of student diversity and the impact of anxiety on learning outcomes. Research in effective learning (see Al Karasneh et al., 2024; Mujiyanto, 2022; Zaky, 2019) suggests that a low-affective filter achieved through strategies like non-judgmental feedback and humour enhances language acquisition and content retention. Furthermore, self-determination theory posits that students are more motivated when they experience autonomy, competence, and relatedness, fostered by these supportive classroom practices (Lin & Wei, 2024).

These findings are consistent with previous studies emphasising the importance of positive teacher-student relationships in fostering student engagement (see Pianta et al., 2012). However, some studies in more traditional educational settings (Chen & Jones, 2007; Cole et al., 2021; Ipinza-Olatte et al., 2023; Jasrial et al., 2021; Page et al., 2024) report that strict discipline and teacher authority still dominate, hindering students' comfort and active participation. The differences could be attributed to cultural variations in teaching styles and expectations regarding classroom authority. Thus, the results indicate that creating a psychologically safe and inclusive learning environment is key to enhancing student engagement in Social Studies classrooms. Teachers implement diverse approaches to reduce

anxiety, foster respect, and build positive relationships, encouraging active participation and deeper learning.

The findings show that teachers have employed their professional skills because they emphasise relationship-building strategies and emotional support techniques to enhance student comfort during the teaching and learning process of Social Studies in rural schools. They also have encouraged flexible and student-centred classroom management (e.g., non-judgmental feedback and culturally responsive teaching) even though they teach students in rural schools with different ethnic, cultural, character, and linguistic backgrounds. These findings imply that educational policies should be integrated into curriculum design with emotional and psychological well-being (Nohilly & Tynan, 2022), particularly in social studies. It aims to ensure that learning environments support both academic and personal growth.

3.3. Violence Prevention Strategies

Teachers must practice preventing violent acts in classrooms. This will make students comfortable and increase their motivation to learn the Social Studies subject. This section provides the results of the data analysis on teachers' strategies for preventing violence in Social Studies learning. It is presented in the following table.

Table 3. Teachers' Strategies for Preventing Violence in Social Studies Learning

No	Teachers' Strategies	Context of Use
1	Integrating conflict resolution topics into lessons	Teachers use a social studies context to discuss peaceful conflict resolution. For example, teachers teach about historical peace agreements and link them to students' daily interactions.
2	Setting clear behavioural expectations in Social Studies class	Teachers establish ground rules for respectful discussions and interactions. For example, the teacher reminds students to listen respectfully and avoid personal attacks before debates or discussions.
3	Encouraging respect for diverse perspectives	Teachers create activities where students analyse different viewpoints on historical and social issues. For example, in a discussion about cultural diversity, students share traditions from their own ethnic backgrounds
4	Addressing aggressive behaviour in classroom discussions	Teachers intervene when students use aggressive tones or language during debates. For example, if a student shouts in disagreement, the teacher pauses the discussion and reinforces respectful communication.
5	Providing constructive feedback without harsh criticism	Teachers listen attentively to students' thoughts and provide support, such as nodding, maintaining eye contact, and responding positively to student input.
6	Promoting inclusive discussions and ensuring equal participation	Teachers ensure that all students feel heard and respected in classroom discussions. For example, encouraging quieter students to share their thoughts in a supportive environment.

Table 3 shows that teachers in this rural school employ various strategies to prevent violence in Social Studies learning, including integrating conflict resolution topics, setting clear behavioural expectations, encouraging respect for diverse perspectives, addressing aggressive behaviour, providing constructive feedback, and promoting inclusive discussions. In rural schools, violence prevention strategies are not only pedagogical choices but necessary adaptations to systemic limitations, such as a lack of structured training in inclusive classroom management. Many rural teachers, including those in this study, learned to manage classroom conflict through experience rather than formal teacher education. This teacher's improvisation may be effective locally, but it signals a

broader need for targeted professional development. Furthermore, some strategies, such as *encouraging equal participation and addressing aggressive behaviour*, represent a clear shift from traditional teacher-centred hierarchies. These teachers promoted egalitarian classroom norms, subtly challenging the conventional teacher-as-authority model. This approach is particularly significant in multicultural classrooms where power dynamics can silence minority voices

Moreover, the findings underscore the importance of equipping rural teachers with systemic support. The strategies outlined above, while contextually adapted, highlight the gaps in formal training programs. Many of these methods were not a result of structured pedagogical design but of personal initiative, empathy, and necessity. This points to the urgent need for institutionalised teacher training focused on conflict resolution, cultural responsiveness, and emotional intelligence. These efforts aim to create a classroom environment that fosters mutual respect, ensures student participation, and minimises conflicts. These findings are supported by the results of the interviews with the students.

"Saya belajar cara menyelesaikan masalah tanpa berkelahi dari pelajaran IPS. Guru sering cerita tentang perjanjian damai dan bagaimana kita bisa gunakan itu dalam kehidupan sehari-hari ("I learned how to solve problems without fighting from Social Studies lessons. The teacher often tells stories about peace agreements and how we can use them in everyday life)" (Student 12)

"Guru membuat aturan kelas yang jelas, jadi semua orang tahu apa yang boleh dan tidak boleh dilakukan." ("The teacher makes clear class rules, so everyone knows what is allowed and what is not)" (Student 8)

"Guru mengajarkan kami untuk menghargai pendapat orang lain, meskipun kami tidak setuju (The teacher taught us to respect other people's opinions, even if we disagree)" (Student 7)

"Guru memberikan saran tentang bagaimana kami bisa memperbaiki jawaban kami tanpa membuat kami merasa bodoh (The teacher gives suggestions on how we can improve our answers without making us feel stupid)" (Student 2)

"Guru selalu memastikan bahwa semua orang punya kesempatan untuk berbicara, bahkan yang pendiam (The teacher always ensures that everyone has a chance to speak, even the quiet ones)" (Student 8)

Moreover, the findings of this study suggest that explicit conflict resolution teaching and establishing clear behavioural norms are important in preventing violence in Social Studies learning. Teachers actively facilitate respectful discourse and inclusive participation, ensuring that students from diverse ethnic backgrounds feel valued and safe in expressing their thoughts. These strategies align with Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, which highlights the importance of interaction and social context in learning (Alkhudiry, 2022). By fostering respectful dialogue, teachers help students develop positive social behaviours contributing to a violence-free learning environment.

These results align with Johnson and Johnson's Cooperative Learning Theory, which argues that structured collaboration promotes peer respect and reduces aggression in classroom settings (X. Yang, 2023). Similarly, Lo (2024) and Diani et al. (2022) support this theory that classrooms which are free of verbal and non-verbal acts and managed well will avoid and reduce conflict between students and students and teachers and students during the teaching and learning process. This is because students feel comfortable and enjoy to learn in this classroom atmosphere.

Furthermore, Gaffney et al. (2021) found that punitive measures were more effective in specific school settings. It implies that positive reinforcement and proactive engagement contribute more

effectively to preventing violence in rural classrooms (Eadens et al., 2020), especially in settings with ethnically diverse populations. This contrast may stem from the unique socio-cultural dynamics of rural schools, where an inclusive and empathetic approach is essential.

The findings suggest that teachers should proactively design lessons incorporating peace education, set clear rules for interaction, and promote equal participation. These strategies not only prevent violence but also enhance student engagement and motivation. Schools should implement teacher training programs focusing on inclusive classroom management and culturally responsive teaching, especially in rural areas. Also, this study highlights how teacher-led strategies, such as structured discussions, peace education, and positive reinforcement, not only prevent violence but also foster inclusion and active student participation. To support these efforts, schools should prioritise teacher training programs focused on culturally responsive classroom management, particularly in rural, multicultural settings.

Thus, considering the above findings, violence prevention in classrooms must be understood not merely as a behavioural strategy, but as a broader effort tied to issues of equity, voice, and power dynamics. Teachers in rural, multicultural settings demonstrate how inclusive practices can challenge traditional hierarchies and promote mutual respect. These informal yet contextually grounded strategies highlight the need for policy support that formalises such approaches through culturally responsive and inclusive teacher training frameworks. As such, policymakers should consider scaling up these localised practices into sustainable educational models for rural schools.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that this study illuminates the practical strategies employed by teachers in a remote, multicultural setting to foster an inclusive and supportive learning environment. Beyond simply identifying these strategies, this study demonstrates their critical role in enhancing student engagement and well-being within the unique challenges of rural education. Specifically, it highlights the necessity for adaptability and cultural sensitivity in teaching practices, revealing how these qualities are essential for overcoming the barriers to effective education in such contexts. This study underscores that inclusive teaching is not merely a theoretical concept but a practical necessity for improving educational outcomes for communities in rural areas.

This study suggests the need for rural teacher training programs in conflict resolution, emotional safety, and culturally responsive pedagogy. To elaborate, these training programs should include specific modules designed to equip rural teachers with the necessary skills to create inclusive and supportive learning environments. For instance, workshops on developing culturally sensitive teaching materials, strategies for managing classroom conflict, and techniques for providing emotional support to students from varied backgrounds are essential. Furthermore, these programs should be integrated into ongoing professional development initiatives to ensure sustained impact and continuous improvement in teaching practices within rural schools.

It is crucial to clarify that this qualitative case study, while providing rich and in-depth insights into the practices at SMPN 3 Siberut Utara, is not intended for generalisation. The study's primary aim was to illuminate the specific strategies and experiences within this unique rural context, rather than to make broad generalisations about all rural schools. The detailed exploration of teacher practices and student experiences provides valuable, context-specific knowledge that can inform and inspire similar efforts in comparable settings. Therefore, Future research should explore teacher strategies in building inclusive classrooms across multiple rural schools to obtain a broader perspective. Longitudinal studies could investigate the long-term impact of these strategies on student academic performance, social behavior, and emotional well-being. Also, comparative studies between rural and urban schools would be valuable in examining how geographic and cultural differences influence classroom inclusivity and violence prevention.

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