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THE EFFECTIVENESS OF EMOTION REGULATION TRAINING IN IMPROVING TEACHERS' ABILITY TO HANDLE CONFLICTS AMONG STUDENTS AT PRIVATE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS IN MEDAN DENAI DISTRICT

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Abstract

Teachers responding to peer conflict must manage their own emotional reactions while assessing student safety and deciding how to intervene. This article develops an emotion regulation training program for private junior secondary school teachers in Medan Denai District, Indonesia, and proposes a design for evaluating its effectiveness. A narrative synthesis integrates research on emotion regulation, teachers' social and emotional competence, and school conflict intervention. The proposed program consists of four weekly sessions covering emotional trigger recognition, cognitive reappraisal, de-escalation and listening, and decisions about facilitation or referral. Its proposed primary outcome is teachers' performance in standardized conflict simulations scored by independent assessors. Self-reported emotion regulation strategies and maintenance of performance are secondary outcomes. The evaluation design compares teachers offered the program with a wait-list group, preferably using school-level randomization to reduce contamination. The article contributes a training structure, a behavioral assessment rubric, and a plan for evaluating whether teachers apply the skills under simulated conditions. The program's effectiveness in Medan Denai remains to be established through field testing.

Keywords: emotion regulation, junior secondary schools, peer conflict, teacher professional development, training evaluation

INTRODUCTION

When two students accuse each other in front of their friends, the teacher must make several decisions quickly. The teacher needs to stop the escalation, ensure the situation is safe, and determine when each student can be heard. At the same time, the teacher may feel angry, anxious, or motivated to immediately determine who is at fault. The way the teacher manages their emotional responses can affect the tone of communication, the order of questions, and the choice of action. In this context, emotional regulation becomes a work skill that can be trained through situations resembling the teacher's daily tasks.

Conflict management also requires teachers to distinguish between disputes that can be facilitated from situations that require formal protection and handling. Differences of opinion in group tasks can be discussed after tensions subside and all parties are ready to be involved. Allegations of bullying, threats, violence, or clear power imbalances require protection and follow-up measures according to school mechanisms. This framework aligns with the Minister of Primary and Secondary Education Regulation Number 6 of 2026 concerning a Safe and Comfortable School Culture, which places safety, dignity, and collaborative handling as part of school administration.

Research on the social-emotional development of teachers provides the basis for testing this training. *The Cultivating Awareness and Resilience in Education* or CARE for Teachers program, for example, shows changes in several indicators of teachers' social-emotional and classroom interactions. The program was studied on elementary school teachers and covers several components. For private junior high school teachers in Medan Denai, the more specific question that needs to be answered is whether training that combines emotion regulation with conflict management training can improve teachers' decisions and actions in scenarios relevant to their work.

This article aims to design the training content, formulate teacher capability indicators, and develop an effectiveness evaluation design. The research question is whether teachers offered training achieve better conflict handling scores on post-training measurements compared to those in the waiting list group after considering initial ability. Medan Denai District is the context for the program implementation. The selection of scenarios stems from

the duties of junior high school teachers and needs to be reviewed together with local school practitioners before field testing.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Emotion regulation in teacher work

Gross (1998) explains emotion regulation as a process that affects when emotions arise, how emotions are experienced, and how emotions are expressed. The emotion regulation process model focuses on several action points, including situational changes, attention diversion, assessment changes, and response regulation. In teacher practice, situational changes can be made by stopping conversations in front of the class and continuing them in a more appropriate place after the situation is safe. Cognitive reassessment can be done by treating assumptions about students' intentions as something that needs to be examined through additional information.

Gross and John (2003) distinguish two strategies that can be measured through *the Emotion Regulation Questionnaire* (ERQ), namely cognitive reassessment and emphasizing emotional expression. This model helps explain why a teacher who appears calm may use different regulatory processes. One teacher may have reassessed the situation and realized that information is still limited. Another teacher may hold back angry expressions in order to complete the task at that time. Self-reports on strategy use provide information about teachers' tendencies, while conflict handling skills require separate measurements.

A meta-analysis by Wang et al. (2023) shows that strategies used before fully developed emotional responses generally have a more adaptive relationship pattern with teacher work factors. These relationships vary depending on how strategies are measured and the research context. This evidence supports the use of several strategies in training, including recognizing triggers, examining initial interpretations, and selecting responses according to the situation.

Social-emotional competence and handling of inter-student conflicts

Jennings and Greenberg (2009) place teachers' social-emotional competence as one of the supports for teacher–student relationships, classroom management, and the learning climate. In conflict management, this competence is evident when teachers are able to ease tension, listen to students' explanations proportionally, maintain their dignity, and make decisions based on available information. Teachers also need to assess whether students can participate voluntarily and safely in dialogue.

Evidence on conflict intervention in schools shows the importance of quality and consistency in implementation. Acosta et al. (2019), in a randomized group test of the school-level restorative practice program, found no significant overall change based on program assignments. The study evaluated broader school interventions than the teacher training proposed here. The lesson for this design is the need to record activities that participants actually received, use indicators close to the skills taught, and monitor the progress of practice after the session ends.

Practice-based training and capability evaluation

The synthesis of Sims et al. (2025) links teacher professional development with understanding, motivation, technique training, and practice reinforcement. For conflict management, facilitators can demonstrate responses to scenarios, ask teachers to repeat actions in simulations, and provide feedback on observable behaviors. In post-training measurements, teachers face scenarios equivalent to new situations so that assessments can capture skill application beyond the exercise examples. Thus, training design and measurement design lead to the same task.

METHOD

Program study design and development

This manuscript uses narrative literature review to develop evaluation programs and designs. Sources are traced through journal websites, academic repositories, and official regulatory portals using the terms *teacher emotion regulation*, *cognitive reappraisal*, *peer conflict*, *restorative practices in schools*, and *teacher professional development*. Literature is selected based on its contribution to the definition of constructs, training components, or ability measurement in conflict situations. The narrative approach allows the combination of findings from several fields to develop a testable design (Snyder, 2019). This article does not involve teacher recruitment, training, or score collection in Medan Denai District.

The synthesis was carried out by translating the concept of emotion regulation into a trainable skill, determining appropriate behavioral indicators, and designing ways to compare results between groups. Sample scenarios were arranged to demonstrate the use of skills in junior high school teachers' duties, including decisions when a case needs to be transferred to the school's handling mechanism.

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Field test design

Proposed participants are active teachers teaching at private junior high schools in Medan Denai District and willing to participate in the research. Schools serve as group placement units to reduce the chances of teachers within one school sharing training materials before the evaluation is completed. If the number of schools is sufficient, schools can be randomized to training groups or waiting list groups after recruitment and initial measurement. The waiting list groups continue to carry out school activities as usual and are offered programs after follow-up measurements. Sample size needs to consider meaningful score changes, similarity of results among teachers within the same school, the number of available schools, and the likelihood that participants will not complete the measurement. If there are too few available schools for adequate effectiveness testing, the initial stage can be used to assess program implementation and instrument feasibility.

Measurements were planned at three times. T0 was conducted before training. T1 was conducted one week after the last session and served as the main measurement point. T2 was conducted four weeks after T1 to assess skill maintenance. Participants were assessed through standardized simulations with adult cast. Independent evaluators used the same rubric and as much as possible did not know the participants' groups or measurement times. Scenario versions were arranged equally and the order could be balanced among participants to reduce the impact of practice from repeated measurements.

Variables and analysis plan

The intervention variable was the offer to participate in a four-session training package. The main outcome was the conflict handling ability score in the simulation at T1. Secondary outcomes included the simulation score in T2 as well as self-reports on the use of emotion regulation strategies. If ERQ was used, reassessment scores and expression emphasis were reported by subscale after the Indonesian version conformity was checked among junior high school teachers. Attendance, completion of exercises, and facilitator suitability with the guidelines were recorded as implementation indicators.

The main analysis was designed to compare T1 scores between groups with T0 score adjustments and to account for teacher grouping within the school. The analysis followed the initial assignment groups, including when teacher attendance levels differed. Planned outcomes were reported as adjusted mean differences and 95% confidence intervals. T2 analysis was used to assess change maintenance, while absenteeism and missing data were reported by group. Field research also required appropriate ethical approval, teacher consent, and access to simulation recordings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Emotion regulation training design

The synthesis results produced a program of four weekly sessions with a proposed duration of 90 minutes per session. Each session included a short demonstration, scenario exercises, and feedback. The sequence followed the decisions faced by the teacher, from recognizing their own emotional responses to choosing follow-up actions appropriate to the level of risk.

Table 1. Design of emotion regulation training sessions

Session	Skill focus	Training activities	Training output
1	Recognizing triggers and initial responses	Identifying emotional signs, distinguishing fact from interpretation, and practicing taking breaks if the situation is safe	Trigger notes and personal response plans
2	Cognitive reassessment	Compile several explanations for the same behavior and determine information that still needs to be checked	Alternative interpretations and clarification questions
3	Relieving tension and listening to students	Conducting a simulation of disputes during group work, using neutral language, and summarizing statements from the parties involved	Performance notes in simulations and one improvement target
4	Determining facilitation or referral	Compare ordinary disputes with scenarios of alleged bullying or threats, then choose protection and follow-up measures	Action plan according to the risk level and school mechanisms

Source. Author synthesis based on Gross (1998), Jennings and Greenberg (2009), Wang et al. (2023), and Sims et al. (2025).

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Reassessment exercises can start from a single scene where a student says that their friend deliberately embarrasses them. The teacher practices identifying what they see or hear, the information given, and information that still needs to be checked. The teacher then develops a calm initial response and gives students space to explain the incident. If the scenario includes threats or indications of bullying, the exercise focuses on safety, support for affected students, and handling according to school procedures. Joint dialogue is considered only if the situation is safe and the participation is voluntary.

Rubric on teachers' ability to handle conflict

The proposed rubric assesses six behavioral aspects. Scores are given based on the actions seen or the next steps explained by the teacher when the simulation is stopped. Two types of scenarios need to be used at each measurement time. The first scenario is a dispute that allows dialogue. The second scenario contains risk indicators that require protection and handling according to school mechanisms. For each type of scenario, several equivalent versions are prepared so that participants do not repeat identical cases.

Table 2. Indicators of teacher ability assessment in handling conflicts among students

Aspects	Examples of performance that meet the indicators
Safety assessment	Checking for direct risks, recognizing signs of threats or power imbalances, and taking appropriate protective measures.
Initial response settings	Setting the tone and giving clear direction without embarrassing the students.
Information mining	Ask neutral questions and check relevant information according to security conditions.
Problem understanding	Summarize known facts, acknowledge information that is not yet available, and avoid premature conclusions.
Accuracy of action choices	Facilitating dialogue if it is safe and voluntary, or activating school handling mechanisms if there are risk indicators.
Follow-up	Mention the next steps, the parties that need to be involved, and how to monitor the situation's development.

Source. Author's design. The rubric requires expert review and trial before being used in field research.

Each aspect can be scored **0** if the action has not been demonstrated or is incorrect, **1** if the action is partially demonstrated, and **2** if the action meets the scenario criteria. Scores range from 0 to 12 per scenario. The main outcome is the average score from two simulations at each measurement time. Important safety errors are recorded separately so that a high total score does not overshadow decisions that pose risks to students. Before the main test, junior high school practitioners and relevant experts need to review the rubric content, then two evaluators can evaluate the same simulation to check agreement among evaluators.

How to interpret training effectiveness

The main evidence of effectiveness was obtained if the training group showed better T1 simulation scores than the waiting list group after the initial scores and school grouping were taken into account. The size of the difference and the accuracy of the estimates need to be read together with the results of each aspect. For example, improvements in neutral communication and information gathering can show benefits in the early stages of handling. If protection decisions remain weak in risky scenarios, these results can be used to strengthen reference materials and decision-making exercises.

Changes in self-report and simulation performance can provide a different picture. If teachers report using reassessments more frequently and simulation scores also increase, both results are consistent with the program's objectives. If self-report improves but simulation performance has not shown clear changes, its applicability still needs to be examined. Comparison with waitlist groups estimates the benefits of training packages that combine emotion regulation and conflict management exercises. To isolate the contribution of emotion regulation components, further research can use active comparison groups with equivalent conflict duration and training.

Simulations allow measurements under uniform conditions without involving students as actors. Improvements in simulation provide information about teachers' ability to handle standardized situations. Implementation in real events and changes in student safety are outputs that require additional evidence. If schools

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use incident records as exploratory indicators, changes in the number of reports also need to be read together with changes in reporting habits and school procedures.

Implications for private junior high schools in Medan Denai District

During field testing, the principal can provide training time and ensure that the handling guidelines used comply with school procedures. Guidance and counseling teachers or assigned personnel can review scenarios and help ensure the alignment of follow-up flows. Facilitators are responsible for maintaining training consistency, while assessment teams independently assess teachers' abilities. This division of roles allows schools to improve training based on data and identify aspects that require organizational support.

The limitations of this study include narrative source selection, intervention evidence partly from other school contexts, and the absence of measurements in Medan Denai. Program duration, equivalence of scenario difficulty levels, rubric reliability, and feasibility of further measurements still need to be examined. Effectiveness testing can be conducted after the instrument and procedure demonstrate feasibility in the trial phase.

CONCLUSION

Emotional regulation training for private junior high school teachers in Medan Denai District can be designed through four sessions covering the introduction of emotional triggers, cognitive reassessment, tension relief, and facilitation or referral selection. These skills are translated into observable actions, including assessing safety, using communication that upholds student dignity, and determining follow-up actions according to risk levels.

The effectiveness of the program can be tested by comparison with the waiting list group, with performance in the one-week post-training conflict simulation as the main output. Follow-up measurements were used to examine skill maintenance, while self-reports complemented information about emotion regulation strategies. The findings of this article consist of program design, rubrics, and evaluation designs. The extent of changes in teacher abilities in Medan Denai District still needs to be determined through field testing.

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