IDARAH
JURNAL PENDIDIKAN DAN KEPENDIDIKAN

Vol. 9 No. 1 (2025) p. 119-134
pISSN: 2549-8193 eISSN: 2656-8012
https://doi.org/10.47766/idarah.v9i1.5860

Rethinking *Guru Penggerak* Program Management in the *Merdeka* Curriculum Era: A Catalyst for Learning Quality Enhancement?

Ririn Handayani,[1] Nova Asvio[2]✉, Mindani[1], Ali Akbarjono[2], Arham Junaidi Firman[3]

[1] Universitas Islam Negeri Fatmawati Bengkulu, Indonesia
[2] Institut Agama Islam Negeri Curup Bengkulu, Indonesia
[3] Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam Negeri Sultan Abdurrahman Kepulauan Riau, Indonesia

✉ ***Corresponding author:***
Nova Asvio
novaasvio@mail.uinfasbengkulu.ac.id

Received: *07 May 2025*
Revised: *10 August 2025*
Accepted: *15 September 2025*
Published: *20 September 2025*

ABSTRACT

This study examines how the *Guru Penggerak* program is managed under the *Merdeka* Curriculum, a framework intended to improve teaching and learning and to raise students' motivation, with particular attention to mathematics education. Using a qualitative descriptive design, we collected data at *SMA Negeri* 1 Ulu Musi from mathematics *Guru Penggerak* teachers, the School principal, the vice-principal for curriculum, and eight eleventh-grade students selected through purposive sampling. The program was managed effectively and in line with established procedures across four stages. Planning involved mapping teachers and instructional strategies, aligning program goals with the school's vision and mission, and involving stakeholders; organizing was characterized by active teacher participation, leadership support, and the application of best practices; implementation brought innovative teaching methods, greater student engagement and achievement, and collaborative, creative school initiatives; and monitoring consisted of applying new strategies and refining the program on the basis of systematic evaluation. The program's success was supported by student motivation, the use of varied teaching methods, technology-based instructional innovation, and sound evaluation techniques. The novelty of the study lies in setting out *Guru Penggerak* program management through explicit indicators and sub-indicators, which gives schools a structured framework for assessment. At *SMA Negeri* 1 Ulu Musi, effective management of the program increased students' interest in mathematics and improved their understanding of the subject through innovative pedagogical practice. We therefore recommend that the program be refined continuously so that gains in the quality of teaching and learning can be sustained.

Keywords: *Educational Management; Educational Evaluation; Guru Penggerak; Instructional Innovation; Learning Quality; Merdeka Curriculum; Student Motivation.*

: https://doi.org/10.47766/idarah.v9i1.5860
Copyright (c) 2025 Idarah (Jurnal Pendidikan dan Kependidikan)

INTRODUCTION

The *Guru Penggerak* program, under the *Merdeka Belajar* policy, shifts the educational focus from academic achievement to fostering independent thinking, creativity, and holistic student development (Ferary, 2023; Hasan et al., 2024). However, its implementation at the school level remains incomplete, with a substantial gap between the expected role of teachers as learning leaders and prevailing traditional practices (Pratikno et al., 2022). Teachers play a crucial role in nation-building and in nurturing students' potential, a role that neither Indonesia's cultural diversity nor technological change diminishes, because their complex responsibilities cannot be replaced (Jumira & Prasetyo, 2025). Educators who lead innovation through the *Guru Penggerak* program are therefore vital (Christensen et al., 2025; Herdiyanti et al., 2025; Imran & Almusharraf, 2025).

A *Guru Penggerak* teacher is expected to manage learning well, build positive relationships with students, use technology effectively, and keep reflecting on and evaluating their teaching in order to improve it (Anggraini & Badrun, 2025; Hasbi, 2025; Hutasoit, 2025). Beyond the classroom, such teachers are required to act as role models, show resilience, and lead change in their own schools and across other educational units (AlAfnan, 2025; Kusumawati et al., 2025; Mena-Guacas et al., 2025).

The program is a collaborative initiative for advancing educational transformation in Indonesia (Bjork & Raihani, 2025). As learning leaders, *Guru Penggerak* teachers are expected to support students' holistic development and help raise educational quality through a student-centered approach (Haq & Hariyati, 2025). They serve as role models and agents of change in realizing the *Pancasila* Student Profile, which seeks to produce lifelong learners who are competent, of good character, and guided by the values of *Pancasila*, the nation's foundational philosophical ideology (Kemenko PMK, 2022). Because the success of teaching and learning depends heavily on teachers who are professional, competent, and well integrated into the school, their capacity must be built and strengthened continuously (Gracia-Zomeño et al., 2025).

This study differs from earlier work in its focus on how the *Guru Penggerak* program is managed to improve the quality of learning at *SMA Negeri* 1 Ulu Musi, particularly in mathematics. Prior research has dealt mainly with the effectiveness of *Guru Penggerak* teachers and their leadership roles; here, the management functions of planning, organizing, implementation, and monitoring are treated as the factors that drive improvement in learning quality. The study thus adds to the literature on Islamic educational management and to research on how the program is implemented in secondary schools.

Earlier studies of the *Guru Penggerak* program have concentrated on leadership development, program effectiveness, and curriculum implementation. Binti Masruruh (2023) examined leadership learning among *Guru Penggerak* teachers in

early childhood education, and Friska Deliana Purba (2024) pointed to the program's effectiveness in improving teachers' competencies in vocational high schools. Revynatasya (2022) investigated the strengthening of human resource training for driving schools, while Pratikno et al. (2022) examined how capable Islamic education teachers were of implementing the *Merdeka* Curriculum. Novita Nur Inayah (2021) discussed the integration of the *Pancasila* Student Profile dimensions, and Firmansyah et al. (2023) used an appreciative inquiry approach to show *Guru Penggerak* teachers as transformative agents within their schools.

Applying the *Guru Penggerak* concept within the *Merdeka Belajar* framework requires educators to move beyond traditional mindsets and bring their practice into line with current educational policy. In the context of Industry 4.0, teachers need stronger pedagogical competence if they are to develop students' critical and creative thinking in keeping with each student's potential. The shift is not easy. Many educators still believe that academic success is measured solely by examination scores, and classroom practice, even among *Guru Penggerak* participants, has yet to reflect the new paradigm fully (Strielkowski et al., 2025). For this reason, *Guru Penggerak* teachers are expected to serve as learning leaders and catalysts in their school communities (Rokhimawan et al., 2023).

This study analyzes the management of the *Guru Penggerak* program at *SMA Negeri* 1 Ulu Musi, concentrating on how it is planned, organized, implemented, and supervised in order to improve educational quality. It also identifies the factors that influence the program's success, including student motivation, instructional strategies, innovation, and evaluation methods. In doing so, it seeks to explain the managerial role the program plays in improving the quality of learning and to show what facilitates and what hinders its implementation.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative methodology grounded in the indigenous paradigm outlined by Nilamsari (2014) to investigate the management of the *Guru Penggerak* program at *SMA Negeri* 1 Ulu Musi and its impact on educational quality. Following Gunawan (2016) and Moleong (2019), the data, collected over five months, comprised descriptive written and oral accounts from mathematics teachers, school leaders, and purposively sampled eleventh-grade students. Data were gathered through interviews, observations, and document analysis, which enabled an in-depth examination of how program administration contributed to better educational outcomes. The interview guidelines are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Interview Guidelines

No	Theme/Indicator	Dimension/Sub-Indicator

1	Program Alignment and Planning	a. The program's objectives are aligned with the school's vision and mission. b. Mapping of teachers and learning activities is conducted. c. Involvement of the principal, teachers, and educational authorities is ensured.
2	Program Organizing	a. Teacher Engagement and Leadership Support b. The level of teacher participation in training programs is assessed. c. Support from the principal and supervisors is provided. d. Best practices are applied within the learning process.
3	Implementation and Student Outcomes	a. Innovative strategies and teaching methods are implemented. b. Student engagement and achievement show improvement. c. Collaboration and innovation are fostered within the school environment.
4	Evaluation and Program Improvement	a. Evaluations are conducted on the application of innovative strategies and methods. b. Program enhancements are made based on the outcomes of these evaluations.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Management of the *Guru Penggerak* Program in Enhancing Educational Quality at *SMA Negeri* 1 Ulu Musi

Program Planning

The *Guru Penggerak* program at *SMA Negeri* 1 Ulu Musi concentrated on improving teachers' competencies and strengthening students' character (Table 2). One of its flagship initiatives was differentiated learning coaching for Grades XI and XII, in which classroom observation and personalized coaching helped teachers adjust their strategies to students' readiness, interests, and learning styles. A "Career Inspiration" class, held as part of the *Pancasila* Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5), invited alumni working as healthcare workers, military personnel, and business practitioners to give students insight into the professional world. To build a conducive school climate, the school also ran a positive culture program themed "Characterful and Bully-Free School," promoted through creative activities such as posters, art performances, and short films.

Technology-based programs supported innovative learning by improving the digital literacy of teachers and students alike. They included training in creating interactive teaching media, in using digital platforms such as Canva and Google Classroom, and guidance on integrating technology into the learning process. For student leadership, a leadership management organization program for the student council (OSIS) developed students' organizational, decision-making, and leadership skills. Twelfth-grade students preparing for university entrance examinations were

supported by lesson study sessions based on the UTBK (Computer-Based Written Exam) and SNBT (Test-Based National Selection), in which teachers relied on tutoring, evaluation, and collaborative reflection to build learning strategies suited to the exam requirements.

The school pursues better teacher competencies, and with them quality education, through continuous professional development and mentoring. It takes responsibility for enabling teachers to join the *Guru Penggerak* program in the belief that their participation improves school performance.

Organization of the Guru Penggerak Program

Organizing is fundamental to the program's objectives because it mobilizes the various components of the school, something that can be done successfully only through collaboration and teamwork. As one *Guru Penggerak* teacher at *SMA Negeri* 1 Ulu Musi described it, organizing involves developing colleagues' competencies by sharing knowledge, disseminating best practices, giving constructive feedback, and encouraging continuous professional development through training programs:

> *"Sharing knowledge and best practices, providing constructive feedback, and fostering personal development through training programs, etc."*

Mentoring by the principal and school supervisors substantially enhanced *Guru Penggerak* teachers' competence through five key activities: systematic classroom observation for academic supervision; internal training (e.g., on the *Merdeka* Curriculum); professional reflection and teacher discussions; career development support and recommendations for professional growth; and monitoring of discipline and ethics. This structured support fostered an environment conducive to teacher professionalism and, consequently, improved educational quality.

Implementation of the Guru Penggerak Program

Table 2: *Guru Penggerak* Activity Program

No	Program	Objective	Activities
1	Differentiated Learning Coaching Program for Grades XI and XII	Enhance teachers' ability to tailor instruction according to students' readiness levels, interests, and learning styles.	1. Conducting classroom observations to assess instructional practices. 2. Providing personalized coaching to teachers focused on differentiated strategies regarding content, products, and outcomes.
2	Positive Culture Program Career and Professional Inspiration Classes	Equip students with knowledge about the professional world aligned	1. Inviting alumni from diverse professional fields, including

		with the themes of the *Pancasila* Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5).	medicine, military, and business, to share insights with students. 2. Organizing the P5 activity series.
3	*Program Budaya Positif* "Character-Building and Bully-Free School" Initiative	Foster a safe, comfortable, and positively characterized school environment.	Leading anti-bullying campaigns through creative means such as posters, art performances, and short films.
4	Digital Technology-Based Learning Innovation	Improve the digital literacy of both teachers and students through technology-based, innovation-driven learning approaches.	1. Delivering training sessions for creating interactive teaching media using platforms such as Canva and Google Classroom. 2. Guiding fellow teachers in integrating technology into the learning process effectively.
5	Leadership Management Organization Program for the Student Council (OSIS)	Develop student leadership skills within school organizations.	Designing leadership training programs aimed at developing students' decision-making skills.
6	Lesson Study Program Based on UTBK and SNBT Exams	Increase the effectiveness of learning in Grade XII to meet the specific requirements of the UTBK/SNBT university entrance examinations.	1. Facilitating targeted learning support for twelfth-grade students, specifically in subjects required for UTBK/SNBT examinations. 2. Coordinating periodic evaluations and reflections through lesson study sessions conducted collaboratively with other teachers to improve instructional practices.

Note. OSIS = *Organisasi Siswa Intra Sekolah* (student council); P5 = *Projek Penguatan Profil Pelajar Pancasila* (*Pancasila* Student Profile Strengthening Project); SNBT = *Seleksi Nasional Berdasarkan Tes* (Test-Based National Selection); UTBK = *Ujian Tulis Berbasis Komputer* (Computer-Based Written Test).

Teacher leadership in management prioritizes coordination, communication, and motivation, which are integral to mobilization activities. The *Merdeka* Curriculum supports individualized learning by accommodating students' varied paces, interests, and talents, allowing teachers to tailor learning experiences accordingly. This approach enhances student motivation, deepens engagement, and fosters the realization of student potential, as affirmed by the curriculum department at *SMA Negeri* 1 Ulu Musi.

> *"Before motivating students in learning, Guru Penggerak teachers participate in both internal and external training sessions conducted by the curriculum development team,*

> *including training on the Merdeka Curriculum. After completing the training, we carry out curriculum evaluations by planning the evaluation objectives, collecting data from learning outcomes, classroom observations, and learning documents, then analyzing the data, preparing reports, and implementing follow-up actions." (Vice Principal 2)*

Implementation of the *Guru Penggerak* program at *SMA Negeri* 1 Ulu Musi was dynamic, covering curriculum training and evaluation, the development of teacher competencies, collaboration between *Guru Penggerak* and non-*Guru Penggerak* teachers, motivational support from school leaders, and student-centered learning. Taken together, these elements made the school's educational ecosystem more adaptive and participatory and brought it into line with the *Merdeka* Curriculum.

Teacher Monitoring

Professional teachers are needed to guide students toward the established competency standards. Their core responsibilities, which include educating, instructing, and evaluating, demand a thorough understanding of curriculum and instructional development and the ability to put it into practice; without these competencies, teachers cannot implement the *Merdeka* Curriculum effectively.

> *"The school organizes both internal and external trainings to ensure that Guru Penggerak teachers maintain their competence. We encourage teachers to participate in professional development programs such as the Guru Penggerak program, PPG, KKG, and MGMP." (TC.2)*

Student Motivation in Learning

Motivation is fundamental to students' learning because it is a precondition both for optimal academic outcomes and for meeting the required competency standards.

> *"The teacher motivates us by sharing stories about successful people, accomplished alumni, and frequently advises and gives us suggestions." (ST.1)*

Academic achievement, often reflected in students' grades, shows how well they have mastered the subject matter and also directly affects whether they progress to higher levels of education. Educators are therefore obliged to pay close attention to students' circumstances and to exercise professional judgment, especially with students who show signs of underperformance, so that teaching and learning become more effective. Evidence from *SMA Negeri* 1 Ulu Musi bears out the importance of this role. In interviews, students reported that their teachers, particularly those in the *Guru Penggerak* program, consistently made deliberate efforts to motivate them at the start

of lessons, a practice that reflects a shared recognition among teachers that student motivation is a foundation for academic success.

Teaching Methods Applied in Learning

An effective teaching and learning process should draw on several instructional methods, used interchangeably or in combination, because each has its own strengths and weaknesses; the teacher's task is to choose those that will make learning meaningful and effective. At *SMA Negeri* 1 Ulu Musi, *Guru Penggerak* teachers frequently used cooperative learning and demonstration to improve learning quality, although they remained free to choose methods that suited the subject matter they were teaching.

Innovation in Learning

Developing interactive learning media is a key step toward more effective learning in the digital era, because such media give students a more engaging, in-depth, and participatory experience. *Guru Penggerak* teachers at *SMA Negeri* 1 Ulu Musi often brought technology into their teaching, using mobile phones, laptops, and projectors, which the school also provided to support better learning. This practice is consistent with the characteristics of 21st-century education.

Learning Evaluation Techniques

Evaluation is an essential phase of education, and it is preceded by assessment. Assessment is the systematic gathering and interpretation of information to inform strategic decisions about students, curricula, programs, and educational policy; it is also the means by which data are selected, collected, and analyzed to identify a program's weaknesses or to judge whether a pedagogical approach has worked. Teachers have autonomy in choosing assessment techniques and instruments and in aligning them with the learning objectives, so that the results are valid and can be acted on. Instruments are developed from a range of adaptive techniques, including observation, performance assessment, written and oral tests, and portfolios, each of which contributes to the goals of evaluation.

> *"As Guru Penggerak teachers, we evaluate learning by using various techniques such as tests, assignments, and observations." (TC.1)*

Learning evaluation is thus a systematic, continuous, and comprehensive process for controlling, assuring, and determining the quality of a learning program, whereas assessment is the process by which teachers obtain information about students' progress and learning outcomes.

Management of the *Guru Penggerak* Program to Enhance Educational Quality at *SMA Negeri* 1 Ulu Musi

Planning of the Guru Penggerak Program

Strategic planning of the *Guru Penggerak* program at *SMA Negeri* 1 Ulu Musi is directed at improving teacher competencies and strengthening student character. The school pursues these aims through training, coaching, mentoring, and ongoing professional development, together with differentiated learning innovations, the integration of digital technology, reinforcement of a positive school culture, and the development of student leadership. The program as a whole is closely monitored by means of classroom observations, discussions, work reports, and ongoing evaluations in which the principal, the curriculum team, teachers, parents, and the school committee take part. Its intended outcome is a collaborative, innovative, and adaptive educational climate that realizes the *Pancasila* Student Profile.

Organization of the Guru Penggerak Program

Organization of the program at *SMA Negeri* 1 Ulu Musi is collaborative and structured: the principal acts as facilitator, and the *Guru Penggerak* teachers are its main drivers. Other teachers take part in professional learning activities, students in innovative projects, and supervisors and the school committee in supervisory roles, and this broad involvement has built a culture of mutual support. Guidance is intensive and continuous. It is delivered through internal training on the *Merdeka* Curriculum, differentiated learning, and digital technology, and reinforced by routine academic supervision from the principal, tiered coaching and mentoring, regular reflective forums, and career development through seminars and scholarly publications. This combined design of organization and guidance is meant to sustain the changes the program has set in motion, and in this way it has had a substantial effect on learning quality at the school.

Implementation of the Guru Penggerak Program

The program is implemented at *SMA Negeri* 1 Ulu Musi in two connected stages, planning and execution. During planning, the principal, *Guru Penggerak* teachers, and other teachers coordinate to map needs related to the *Merdeka* Curriculum, differentiated learning strategies, and the use of digital technology (Bashori et al., 2024), and these needs are then translated into training schedules and targets aligned with the *Pancasila* Student Profile framework. Execution is continuous: *Guru Penggerak* teachers take part in training, apply what they have learned in their classrooms, and mentor colleagues through lesson study, peer teaching, and learning community forums. Applying differentiated and project-based learning innovations in this way gives students more varied learning experiences, while reflection and the sharing of best practices within learning communities build teachers' collective capacity.

Supervision of the Guru Penggerak Program

Supervision of the *Guru Penggerak* program at *SMA Negeri* 1 Ulu Musi was systematic, carried out through training, the formation of curriculum development teams, support from the principal, and communication with parents and the school committee. This finding is consistent with Maskanah and Marno (2024), who stressed the principal's role in supervising implementation of the *Guru Penggerak* program by facilitating, monitoring, and giving feedback. Monitoring of this kind improves the competencies of the teachers concerned and also encourages other teachers to pursue professional development, which helps build an educational ecosystem grounded in collaboration and innovation.

A Strategic Framework for Strengthening the Educational Ecosystem through the *Guru Penggerak* Program

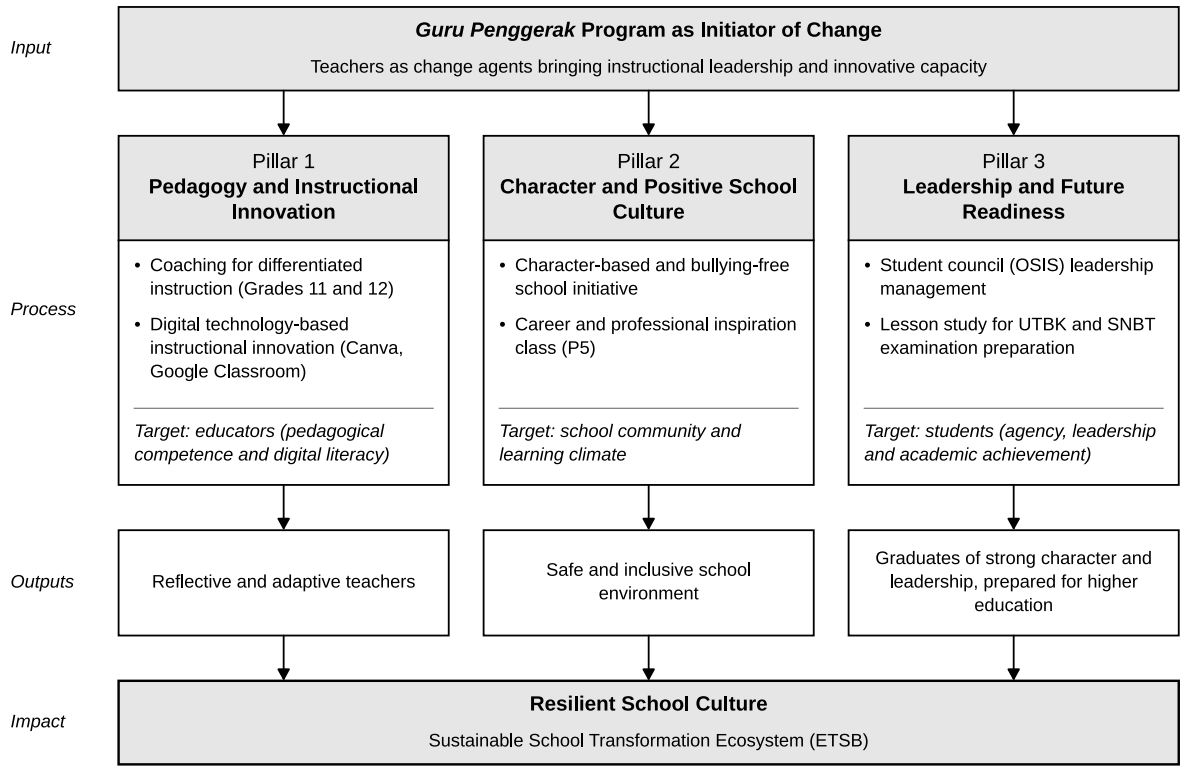


Figure 1: A Strategic Framework for Strengthening the Educational Ecosystem through the *Guru Penggerak* Program

Figure 1 presents a systematic framework for understanding how educational management practices influence school performance. It integrates key components such as organizational leadership, resource allocation, and stakeholder engagement, positioning these elements as interdependent factors that collectively drive educational quality. By adopting a holistic perspective, the model emphasizes the dynamic interactions between administrative strategies and pedagogical outcomes,

thereby providing a comprehensive lens for evaluating school improvement initiatives.

The findings derived from applying this model underscore its practical relevance, demonstrating that effective management is not limited to isolated interventions but requires coordinated efforts across multiple domains. This insight highlights the necessity for school leaders to engage collaboratively with teachers, students, and external stakeholders to foster an environment conducive to sustained academic excellence. Consequently, the model may contribute to educational management theory by bridging conceptual understanding with actionable strategies, offering both researchers and practitioners a valuable tool for enhancing educational quality.

Factors Affecting the Implementation of the *Guru Penggerak* Program at *SMA Negeri* 1 Ulu Musi

Four factors influenced how effective the *Guru Penggerak* program was at *SMA Negeri* 1 Ulu Musi. The first was student motivation, which had a strong effect on learning outcomes. Teachers raised motivation through storytelling, ice-breaking, games, and personal engagement, approaches that LeGeros et al. (2024) found to heighten enthusiasm and focus. The interviews showed that these teachers fostered both a nurturing learning environment and academic achievement (Al Yakin et al., 2023).

Second, teachers varied their methods according to the characteristics of the subject matter, relying above all on collaborative group work and demonstrations. Croak and Walker (2024) likewise found that diversified methods, especially collaborative and experiential ones, improve comprehension and engagement and develop the critical and creative thinking that 21st-century education aims for (Rokhimawan et al., 2023).

Third, the integration of technology, including smartphones, Canva, PowerPoint, and projectors, drove interactive learning innovations. This finding is consistent with Maričić and Lavicza (2024), who showed how technology boosts students' creativity and understanding while promoting digital literacy and meaningful collaboration. Finally, teachers used a range of assessment techniques, from tests and assignments to observations, to monitor progress comprehensively, an approach also emphasized by Sayed et al. (2024) because it allows instruction to be improved on the basis of data. This practice reflects the program's commitment to ongoing, evidence-based evaluation and to professional teaching standards.

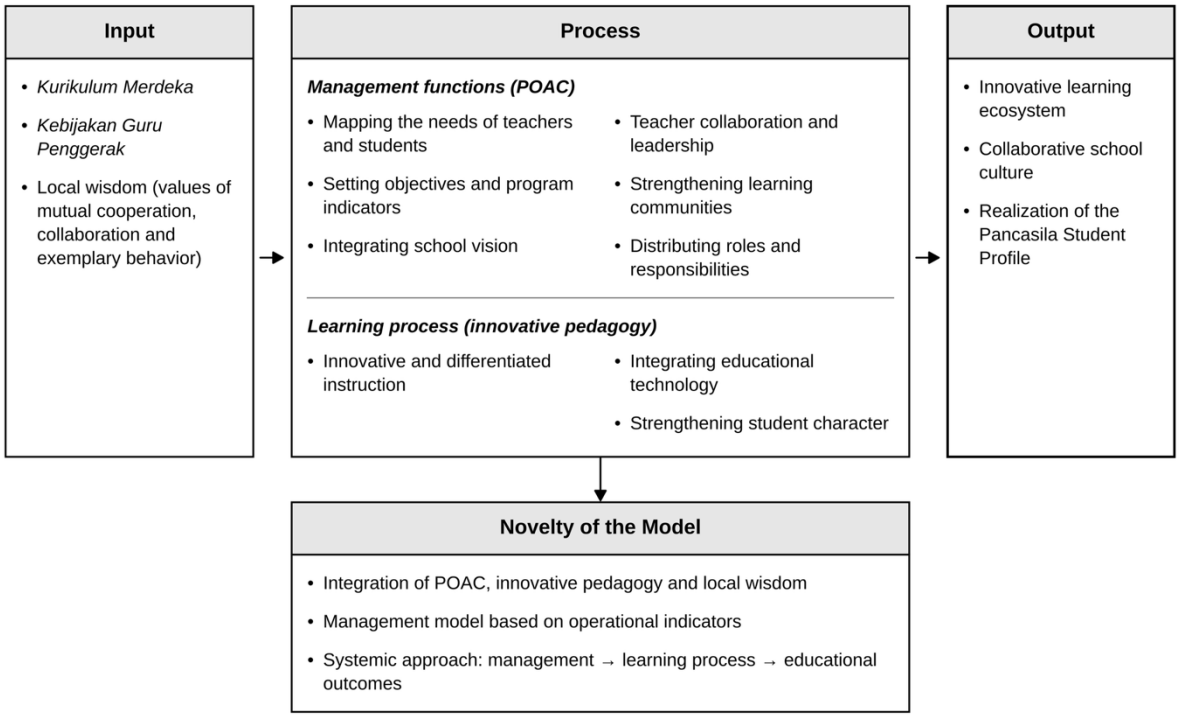


Figure 2: Descriptive-Performative *Guru Penggerak* Model

Figure 2 shows how the POAC (planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling) managerial functions are integrated with contextual, value-based pedagogical practice. From an educational management perspective, the model indicates that learning quality depends not only on how effectively the program is implemented but also on the systemic coherence of strategic planning, collaborative organizing, innovative execution, and reflective, data-driven supervision. Read in relation to local wisdom, it also shows that the program's success is not generic; rather, it adapts to the social values, cultural norms, and character of the school community.

The novelty of this research lies in its move from a descriptive-performative analysis to a systemic, structured managerial perspective. Earlier studies tended to examine only part of the picture, such as the role, leadership, or effectiveness of *Guru Penggerak* teachers, whereas this study argues for treating the four POAC functions as the principal analytical framework for explaining the program's success. Doing so clarifies the implementation process as a whole and yields a set of indicators and operational sub-indicators that can be replicated as evaluation instruments in wider educational contexts. The study thereby reinforces the strategic role of educational management in transforming learning quality.

The program's effectiveness did not arise on its own. It rested on the combined contribution of student motivation, technology-based learning innovation, diverse teaching methods, and adaptive evaluation operating within a coherent ecosystem. Student motivation, collaborative learning practices, and the strengthening of a

positive school culture can also be read as expressions of local values embedded in the school environment, among them mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*), exemplary behavior, and collective ethics. The novelty of the research therefore also lies in an educational management model that is contextual and cultural as well as rational and instrumental, which makes it more relevant and sustainable and strengthens its capacity to transform educational quality (Ferary, 2023).

By providing detailed micro-contextual evidence from a single school, the findings extend earlier work and produce a conceptual model that both explains the program's success and can be applied in practice. In this respect, the study helps bridge the gap between educational policy and its implementation at the institutional level.

CONCLUSION

Management of the *Guru Penggerak* program at *SMA Negeri* 1 Ulu Musi has been implemented effectively through the POAC functions of planning, organizing, actuating (implementation), and controlling (supervision). The program has shown that it can improve learning quality through needs-based planning for teachers and students, organizing that stresses collaboration and intensive development, implementation built on internal and external training, learning innovation, and mentoring, and continuous supervision through evaluation and reflection. Student motivation, diverse teaching methods, technology-based learning innovation, and varied evaluation techniques set *Guru Penggerak* teachers apart from other teachers and enable them to act as agents of change and role models for their peers. The study therefore recommends sustained development of the program, with full support from schools and policymakers, so that educational quality continues to improve and the *Pancasila* Student Profile is realized in concrete terms.

Author Contributions (CRediT): RH: Conceptualization, Investigation, and Writing – Original Draft; NA: Methodology, Supervision, and Writing – Review & Editing; MM: Data Curation and Formal Analysis; AA: Validation and Writing – Review & Editing; AJF: Resources and Visualization.

Funding Statement: This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

Acknowledgments: The authors thank the principal, the vice-principal for curriculum, the *Guru Penggerak* teachers, and the students of *SMA Negeri* 1 Ulu Musi for their time and for giving the authors access to the school during data collection.

Conflict of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest relevant to the content of this article.

Data Availability Statement: The interview transcripts, observation notes, and school documents supporting the findings of this study are not publicly available to protect participant confidentiality, but anonymized data can be obtained from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

Declaration of Generative AI: During the preparation of this work, the authors used Claude (Anthropic, claude-opus-5-5) in 2025 for language editing and to improve the readability of the manuscript, after which they reviewed and edited the content and take full responsibility for the publication.

Informed Consent Statement: Informed consent was obtained from all participants involved in the study, including consent from parents or guardians of the student participants under 18 years of age, and all personal identifiers have been anonymized.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Al Yakin, A., Muthmainnah, M., Apriani, E., Obaid, A. J., & Elngar, A. A. (2023). Transforming online learning management: Generative models on ChatGPT to enhance Online Student Engagement Scale (OLE). *Idarah (Jurnal Pendidikan dan Kependidikan)*, *7*(2), 135–148. https://doi.org/10.47766/idarah.v7i2.1514

AlAfnan, M. A. (2025). Enhancing educational outcomes using AlAfnan taxonomy: Integrating cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. *International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education (IJERE)*, *14*(3), 2419. https://doi.org/10.11591/ijere.v14i3.33147

Anggraini, R., & Badrun, M. (2025). Pengaruh manajemen pembelajaran problem based learning (PBL) dan minat belajar terhadap prestasi siswa SD. *Manajemen Pendidikan*. https://doi.org/10.37630/jpm.v15i2.2719

Bashori, B., Novebri, N., & Prasetyo, M. A. M. (2024). Pembelajaran daring di lembaga pendidikan dan tenaga kependidikan: Analisis efektivitas penggunaan learning management system Space. *POTENSIA: Jurnal Kependidikan Islam*, *10*(1), 1. https://doi.org/10.24014/potensia.v10i1.29981

Bjork, C., & Raihani. (2025). Educational reform in Indonesia: The role of the principal. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*. Advance online publication. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603124.2025.2511637

Christensen, I.-M. F., Markauskaite, L., Dohn, N. B., Ripley, D., & Hachmann, R. (2025). Introduction: Creating design knowledge in educational innovation. In *Creating design knowledge in educational innovation* (pp. 1–18). Routledge.

Croak, A., & Walker, G. J. (2024). Hands-on climate engagement: Principles for effective hands-on activities and demonstrations. *Journal of Science Communication*, *23*(3), N03. https://doi.org/10.22323/2.23030803

Ferary, D. (2023). A philosophical perspective on the purpose of education in Indonesia. In *Comparative and decolonial studies in philosophy of education* (pp. 51–71). Springer Nature Singapore. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-99-0139-5_4

Firmansyah, C., Ubaidillah, U., & Busriyanti, B. (2023). Design of the "Merdeka Belajar" program for students of high school education. *Munaddhomah: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam*, *4*(1), 38–48. https://doi.org/10.31538/munaddhomah.v4i1.328

Gracia-Zomeño, A., García-Toledano, E., García-Perales, R., & Palomares-Ruiz, A. (2025). Perceptions of the promotion of entrepreneurial competence in the education system among education professionals. *Education Sciences*, *15*(4), 477. https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci15040477

Gunawan, I. (2016). *Metode penelitian kualitatif: Teori & praktik*. Bumi Aksara.

Haq, A. M., & Hariyati, N. (2025). Improving teacher performance in implementing Pancasila Student Profile Project through coaching-based academic supervision. *Tarbawi: Jurnal Keilmuan Manajemen Pendidikan*, *11*(1), 137–148. https://doi.org/10.32678/tarbawi.v11i01.9555

Hasan, A., Fatiya, A., & Hrebatć, M. (2024). Transformative leadership in education: Principal leadership styles and the implementation of Merdeka Belajar Curriculum at school. *Development: Studies in Educational Management and Leadership*, *3*(2), 117–130. https://doi.org/10.47766/development.v3i2.4843

Hasbi, H. (2025). Peran kepemimpinan kepala sekolah dalam mendorong profesionalisme guru sekolah dasar. *Journal of Character and Elementary Education*, *4*(3), 1–12.

Herdiyanti, Y., Janah, M., & Susanto, R. (2025). Building a golden generation: Synergy of education, technology, and Qur'anic values. *Journal of Islamic Studies and Educational Innovation*, *1*(1), 36–48.

Hutasoit, D. T. (2025). Guru Penggerak sebagai agen transformasi pendidikan: Tinjauan literatur terhadap peran, tantangan, dan kolaborasi. *Jurnal Pendidikan MIPA*, *15*(2), 551–561. https://doi.org/10.37630/jpm.v15i2.2719

Imran, M., & Almusharraf, N. (2025). [Review of the book *Teaching innovation in university education: Case studies and main practices*, by J. R. Saura (Ed.)]. *The Social Science Journal*, *62*(1), 236–238. https://doi.org/10.1080/03623319.2023.2201973

Jumira, J., & Prasetyo, M. A. M. (2025). Optimising the quality of graduates trough the development of character and competence of Ulumuddin Vocational High School. *Intelegensia: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, *13*(1), 35–45. https://doi.org/10.34001/intelegensia.v13i1.7937

Kemenko PMK. (2022). *Merdeka Belajar, ikhtiar memperkuat pilar pendidikan*. https://www.kemenkopmk.go.id/merdeka-belajar-ikhtiar-memperkuat-pilar-pendidikan

Kusumawati, E., Suswandari, & Umam, K. (2025). Strengthening teacher competence for leading and sustaining the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. *Cogent Education*, *12*(1), 2501458. https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2025.2501458

LeGeros, L., Bishop, P. A., Netcoh, S., & Downes, J. (2024). Informing the implementation of personalized learning in the middle grades through a school-

wide genius hour. In *Dialogues in middle level education research* (Vol. 3, pp. 121–154). Routledge.

Maričić, M., & Lavicza, Z. (2024). Enhancing student engagement through emerging technology integration in STEAM learning environments. *Education and Information Technologies*, *29*(17), 23361–23389. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-024-12710-2

Mena-Guacas, A. F., López-Catalán, L., Bernal-Bravo, C., & Ballesteros-Regaña, C. (2025). Educational transformation through emerging technologies: Critical review of scientific impact on learning. *Education Sciences*, *15*(3), 368. https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci15030368

Moleong, L. J. (2019). *Qualitative research methods*. Remaja Rosdakarya.

Nilamsari, N. (2014). Memahami studi dokumen dalam penelitian kualitatif. *Wacana: Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Komunikasi*, *XIII*(2), 177–181.

Pratikno, Y., Hermawan, E., & Arifin, A. L. (2022). Human resource 'Kurikulum Merdeka' from design to implementation in the school: What worked and what not in Indonesian education. *Jurnal Iqra': Kajian Ilmu Pendidikan*, *7*(1), 326–343. https://doi.org/10.25217/ji.v7i1.1708

Rokhimawan, M. A., Aulia, M. G., Rifai, I., & Azahro, S. L. (2023). The correlation between understanding the Independent Learning – Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) curriculum with the fulfilment of PAI student learning rights. *Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam*, *20*(2), 279–292. https://doi.org/10.14421/jpai.v20i2.8049

Sayed, A. R., Khafagy, M. H., Ali, M., & Mohamed, M. H. (2024). Predict student learning styles and suitable assessment methods using click stream. *Egyptian Informatics Journal*, *26*, 100469. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eij.2024.100469