

Guru Penggerak and Elementary Teacher Collaboration

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Abstract

The lack of collaboration competency among elementary school teachers has been one of the persistent challenges in improving educational quality at the grassroots level in Indonesia. This research analyses the significant impact of the "Guru Penggerak" Program on local network competency collaboration among Elementary School Teachers in Bekasi, which is a crucial step to facing education challenges in the 21st century. Using a descriptive qualitative approach with a case study design, this research involved ten schools (seven state and three private schools) and collected data through in-depth interviews, observation, and document analysis. The subjects of this research involved 10 elementary schools with eight relevant respondents' selected using purposive sampling. The data analysis process followed a thematic model included data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The result shows that the "Guru Penggerak" Program is not only a success in forming an innovative study community, but also strengthens collaboration skills, improves teaching quality, and prepares the teachers as the leader in learning. Although challenges exist, such as time and administrative constraints, the positive impact of this program on the relationship between schools and learning practice emphasizes the urgency of education reformation. This research is expected to give deep insight into the development of a more effective education policy, to make the "Guru Penggerak" Program an important model to improve teacher's collaboration competency extensively.

Keywords: Collaboration Competency, Elementary School Teachers, Guru Penggerak, 21st Century Skill.

Introduction

In facing more complex education challenges, elementary school teachers have an important role in forming strong education cornerstone for the development of students' knowledge, skills, and character (1). The Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia, Nadiem Anwar Makarim, introduced an independent learning concept, which gives autonomy to the educational institutions and reduces bureaucracy. Furthermore, several new programs have been introduced to increase education quality, including the "Guru Penggerak" Program. This program became a focus in strengthens teacher's role as a learning leader and agents of change at schools (2). Guru Penggerak is an official program initiated by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, designed as both a professional development initiative and a national education policy to empower teachers as leaders of learning and change agents in schools. The legal foundation of this program is regulated under the Ministerial Regulation of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia Number

26 of 2022 on Guru Penggerak Education, which affirms its status as a formal and strategic program in the national education system. "Guru Penggerak" Program aims to develop teachers who have the capability to lead the learning process to be centered on students. In this context, "Guru Penggerak" is expected to support the students to have critical thinking, and creativity, and develop their self-potential thoroughly. The success of "Profil Pelajar Pancasila" implementation became one of the important indicators in this program, where the "Guru Penggerak" should build a more open and collaborative learning space (2). Therefore, "Guru Penggerak" is not only improving learning quality but also becoming a pilot of change in the education ecosystem. In practical terms, teachers who graduate as "Guru Penggerak" can take on strategic roles such as vice principals in charge of learning development, coordinators of subject teacher forums (MGMP/KKG), or mentors for other teachers to strengthen professional practice. Furthermore, "Guru Penggerak" has the potential to become future education leaders,

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including principals, school supervisors, and leaders of learning communities, as the program equips them with leadership skills to drive transformation and act as agents of educational change. In an effort to make this program massive, the government gave various trainings, mentorships, and support to the selected teachers. The goal is to build a collaborative learning environment, where the teachers could exchange effective teaching practices (3). This program also emphasizes the importance of collaboration among schools and study communities as a platform to share knowledge and experiences (4). The collaboration is expected to improve the quality of education extensively at the elementary school level, especially in teaching methods and curriculum development.

One of the successes of the “Guru Penggerak” program is forming a study community that makes the teachers interact and learn from each other. By forming a study community, “Guru Penggerak” will not only become the leader at their school but also become a mentor for their colleagues. This study community opens constructive dialogue and collaboration space that could improve learning quality at school (5–7). The role of “Guru Penggerak” has the catalyst of change in education in the local area becomes a key to the success of this program in bringing relevant education innovation to the student’s needs.

On the other hand, the “Guru Penggerak” program also tries to build a learning leader who can respond to the challenges of time, including challenges in technology use. “Guru Penggerak” must be able to utilize technology in the learning process, reflection, and sustainable improvement (8, 9). Moreover, this program aims to change education culture by adjusting the learning approach based on the local condition and student’s needs. It makes “Guru Penggerak” as the agent of change in supporting education transformation at elementary school.

Differentiated learning became one of the key elements in the “Guru Penggerak” Program. The thought of Ki Hajar Dewantara which emphasized the importance of students’ freedom of soul, mind, and energy in the learning process became a foundation of this program (10). “Guru Penggerak” must be able to build relevant and adaptive learning with current development, so students can develop their self-potential optimally. In this

context, teachers act as visionary, critical, and creative leaders, and can explore new methods in the learning process.

The urgency of collaboration competency among teachers has become more important for education in the 21st century. An effective collaboration may improve teaching quality, support idea exchange, the development of curriculum, and innovative solutions for education challenges (10–12). In global and complex learning, the capability to work in a team, have good communication and share experiences became crucial. It is in line with education transformation that accentuates learning with team-based and collaborative networks that have been proven to improve the learning results of the students (13). Thus, collaboration competency is an essential foundation for an education ecosystem that is inclusive and sustainable (14).

Various research shows high interest in the “Guru Penggerak” issue. This program, introduced around five years ago, aims to increase the capacity and professionalism of teachers in teaching and managing education. “Guru Penggerak” plays an important role in *Merdeka* learning by working to learn with technology, doing reflections, and supporting students to be independent in reaching academic achievement (2). They are expected to motivate teacher colleagues to learn from each other to improve education quality and apply relevant learning methods that align with current development (15). In this era, collaboration among teachers to build practitioners community and develop effective evaluation material is crucial, especially in facing dynamics of digital education (16–18). The teachers are expected to have leadership and a visionary, critical, and creative mindset to produce leading students that show *Pancasila* student profile (19).

The “Guru Penggerak” program in Indonesia shares similarities with various teacher leadership initiatives worldwide. In the United States, the Teacher Leadership Initiatives emphasize teachers’ roles as mentors and curriculum developers (20). In the United Kingdom, the Advanced Skills Teacher (AST) program provides career and financial incentives for outstanding teachers to mentor peers (21). In Japan, Lesson Study (*Jugyō Kenkyū*) highlights reflective collaboration based on classroom research (22). In Finland, Teacher Leadership emphasizes

autonomy and professional trust in curriculum development (23). Furthermore, in Singapore, Instructional Leadership focuses on the role of principals and key teachers in maintaining high academic standards (24). However, the uniqueness of “Guru Penggerak” lies in its foundation on the values of gotong royong (mutual cooperation) and Pancasila, which not only equip teachers with pedagogical and leadership competencies but also position them as agents of educational transformation who foster national character and build an inclusive, collaborative learning ecosystem rooted in Indonesia’s cultural identity. Therefore, it is crucial to do in-depth research regarding the effectiveness of the “Guru Penggerak” Program, especially in improving collaboration competency among the teachers to improve teaching quality in elementary school. Through the comprehensive analysis, this research shows the efforts that could be made to handle the obstacles that might happen and optimize the collaboration competency of the teachers at the local level. Other than that, the result of this research delivers a fundamental theory that is relevant to the teachers’ competency which is actualized through the “Guru Penggerak” program.

Methodology

Design Research

This research used an interpretive-constructivist paradigm with a descriptive qualitative approach and case study design. A case study is able to do an in-depth analysis of a case, program, or certain activity that involves one individual or more (25,26). The focus of this research is to explore the effect of the “Guru Penggerak” program on collaboration competency among students at an elementary school in West Bekasi. Through a case study, the researcher was able to gain a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of program implementation, both individual and collective responses of the teachers, as well as contextual factors in the school environment that influence the formation of collaboration.

Research Participant

The subjects of this research involved 10 elementary schools with eight relevant respondents’ selected using purposive sampling. This technique was chosen to allow the researcher to deliberately select participants based on specific criteria aligned with the research objectives. The

eight participants consisted of four active teachers participating in the “Guru Penggerak” program and four teachers from the “Sekolah Imbas” (partner schools) involved in the program implementation. The criteria for research subjects covered several important aspects. The participants were active teachers who had been involved in the “Guru Penggerak” program for at least one year and actively contributed to school development activities. They also included teachers from partner schools who maintained direct interaction with “Guru Penggerak” through local collaboration programs. In addition, the subjects were those who had prior experience in professional teacher development initiatives or learning communities. Another essential criterion was their willingness to participate in interviews and to share reflective experiences regarding the impact of the “Guru Penggerak” program on local network collaboration within their respective schools. The selection of participants based on these criteria enabled the researcher to obtain in-depth and relevant data regarding the program’s impact on strengthening teachers’ collaboration competency. The study was conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki, and approved by the Institutional Review Board of Universitas Bhayangkara Jakarta Raya (protocol code 2025/IRB-004 and date of approval: 12 Mei 2025).

Data Collection Techniques

Data collection was done through in-depth interviews, observation, and analysis of related documents. In-depth interviews were carried out semi-structurally with “Guru Penggerak” and teachers from partner schools using interview guidelines covering topics such as collaboration experience, roles in learning communities, and the program’s impact on teaching practices. Participatory observation was conducted by directly attending collaborative activities such as teacher discussions, training sessions, or best practice sharing, using an observation guide that included aspects of participation, interaction, and facilitation by “Guru Penggerak.” Documentation techniques were used to collect supporting documents such as program activity reports, meeting minutes of learning communities, collaborative modules, visual documentation, and school decrees, all of which served to strengthen and verify the findings from the interviews and observations.

Data Analysis Techniques

The data analysis process followed a thematic model that included data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing (27). The data reduction process involved selecting, simplifying, and organizing raw data from interviews, observations, and documentation to focus on information relevant to the research objectives. Data not directly related to collaboration competency within the context of the “Guru Penggerak” program was eliminated to maintain analytical consistency. Once filtered, the next step was data presentation, which was carried out in the form of descriptive narratives and thematic diagrams. This presentation enabled the researcher to identify patterns, relationships between categories, and key themes that emerged from the data. The results from this stage formed the basis for drawing conclusions systematically and in depth.

To ensure the result's credibility, this research applied data triangulation, member checking, and auditing. Triangular combines various data resources to validate the result, while member checking was done to confirm findings to the

participants. Auditing involves external parties to evaluate the conformity of findings with the actual situation. The result of this research is expected to give new knowledge for the development of education policy regarding the “Guru Penggerak” program and improving collaboration competency among teachers at elementary schools in Bekasi.

Results

Profile of “Guru Penggerak”

Collaboration Competence

This research analyzes the implementation of “Guru Penggerak” program in Bekasi, especially at Gugus Kranji V and Gugus Kota Baru X to identify the impact for “Guru Penggerak” Program that was on going at Gugus Kota Baru X with four active “Guru Penggerak” teachers, while at Gugus Kranji V, although there was not a single teacher that has been passed the program, study community still actively developed. The success of “Guru Penggerak” Program in Bekasi are visible on how the “Guru Penggerak” able to be the agent of change at their school through the collaboration initiative and sustainable learning, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: The Change of Collaboration Competency at School

Collaboration Competency	Before the Program (%)	After the Program (%)
Partnership Among Schools	40	85
Teaching Practice Exchange	30	75
The involvement in Study Community	20	95

Table 1 shows a significant change in collaboration competency at school after the implementation of the “Guru Penggerak” Program. Before the program, there were only 40% of respondents reported the partnership among schools, but the numbers increased to 85% after the program occurred. Teaching practice exchange also increased from 30% to 75%, showing that the teachers now are more active in sharing teaching strategies. Other than that, the involvement in the

study community also dramatically increased from 20% to 95%, which indicates that this program was successful in building a strong collaborative space for the teachers to support and learn from each other. This result signifies that the “Guru Penggerak” Program improves collaboration skills among teachers at school, which can be seen in Figure 1 through the regular discussions held among teachers across schools.



Figure 1: Regular Discussions among Teachers across Schools

The observation results revealed that within the learning communities formed by the “Guru Penggerak”, there was intensive interaction among teachers from various schools, which strengthened the partnership network. Regular meetings and group discussions served as important platforms for them to support one another and collectively address educational challenges. In an interview, one “Guru Penggerak” stated:

“Partnerships between schools make me feel that I am not working alone. We share teaching materials and effective learning strategies, so students at our schools benefit from the experiences of other teachers. This program helps build a sense of togetherness and synergy among schools.”

Furthermore, the research data showed that the exchange of teaching practices increased

significantly after the implementation of the “Guru Penggerak” Program—from 30% before the program to 75% after it began. This indicates that teachers have become more active in sharing teaching methods, learning strategies, and effective evaluation techniques across schools. Observations revealed that these teaching practice exchanges took place through various forums such as workshops, joint training sessions, and classroom visits between “Guru Penggerak” and teachers from partner schools. In an interview, a “Guru Penggerak” expressed:

“I’ve learned a lot from fellow teachers about various teaching methods I hadn’t tried before. By sharing experiences, I can develop more varied and effective teaching approaches that suit my students’ characteristics.”



Figure 2: Collaboration skills through study community

The strengthening of collaboration skills through study communities can be seen in Figure 2, illustrating how these forums have encouraged knowledge-sharing and mutual support among teachers. Local network collaboration competency

among teachers improved through the study community initiated by “Guru Penggerak”. At Gugus Kota Baru X, this study community has the function of being a place for sharing the best learning practices and strategies. Through a

webinar, discussion, and training, the teachers could learn from each other and strengthen their collaboration skills. Here is the statement from R1,

"I could feel the benefit from the study community that was formed through "Guru Penggerak" Program. This community became a precious place to discuss for me. Activities such as webinars and regular discussions make me learn and strengthen my collaboration skills. The relation among schools also becomes tighter; therefore we could share material sources and experiences that are beneficial to improve teaching quality in class."

Based on the statement of Respondent 1, the "Guru Penggerak" Program has strengthened inter-school relationships as a vital medium for sharing

educational resources, experiences, and solutions. Observation results support this, showing that communication among teachers became more open and that trust was built, fostering effective collaboration. Through regular meetings, webinars, and learning community discussion forums, teachers exchanged teaching methods, instructional materials, and assessment strategies that had been successfully implemented. This collaborative environment not only improved individual teaching practices but also fostered a collective responsibility to enhance the quality of education in the area. Moreover, teachers were able to find creative solutions, adapt best practices to their school contexts, and build professional networks that support continuous skill development.

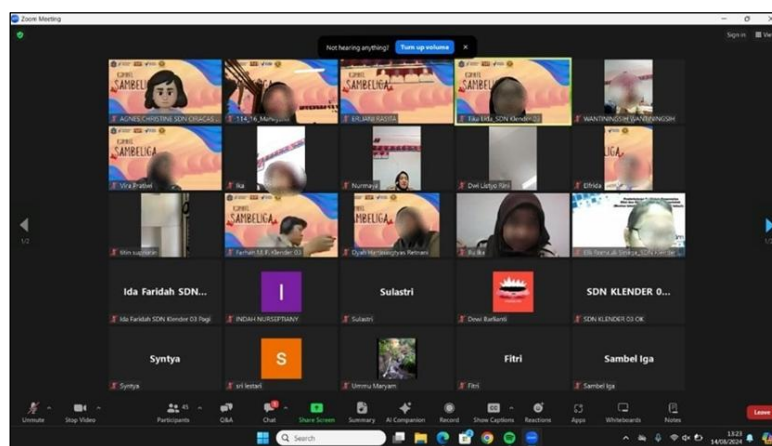


Figure 3: Webinar facilitated by a Guru Penggerak

Program to strengthen "Guru Penggerak" collaboration competence

One of the important findings is the program is not only improved the teaching competency but also build leadership among teachers. "Guru Penggerak" were trained to become learning leaders who could encourage positive change at their school. Not only to implement better learning methods, they also motivate other teachers to improve learning quality. As stated by R2, of course! Here is the summary:

"The "Guru Penggerak" Program has brought change to me, not only in my teaching competency but also in my leadership skills. The training we received made me more confident as a teacher in class. Other than applying better teaching methods, I am also motivated to encourage other teachers to improve learning quality. I am sure if we

could lead ourselves at least in class, we could bring wider positive change."

This statement illustrates that the training provided equipped teachers not only to focus on improved teaching methods but also to take on the role of instructional leaders who can motivate peers to enhance overall learning quality. This is supported by observation findings, which show that "Guru Penggerak" actively initiated various collaborative activities in their respective schools. For instance, they led regular discussion forums with fellow teachers to share experiences and effective teaching strategies. Observations also indicated that these teachers were able to facilitate internal training and workshops aimed at improving the pedagogical competence of other teachers at their schools. This reinforces their role as change agents who not only improve their own teaching practices but also elevate the overall quality of instruction collectively, as can be seen in

Figure 3 through the webinars facilitated by “Guru Penggerak” in their schools.

Additionally, field observations showed that “Guru Penggerak” were more proactive in establishing effective communication with school stakeholders, including principals and curriculum staff. They often acted as liaisons between government programs and school-level implementation,

ensuring that innovations and the latest teaching methods could be properly adopted. This role demonstrates the increased responsibility they carry as instructional leaders capable of driving systematic change within schools, as can be seen in Figure 4, which presents examples of teaching material products resulting from cross-school collaboration initiatives.



Figure 4: Teaching Material Products Resulting from Cross-School Collaboration

Another interview with R3 further reinforced these findings, where R3 mentioned that the leadership training within the program provided an understanding of the importance of collaboration and continuous professional development. According to R3:

“We were taught how to be leaders who can drive change—not only in our own classrooms but also in the broader school environment. This encouraged us to take more initiative in inviting other teachers to collaborate and continue learning together.”

Additional observations showed that after participating in the program, “Guru Penggerak”

experienced increased confidence in leading discussions and trainings, as well as in managing conflicts and building synergy among teachers. This proactive attitude became the key to establishing strong learning communities within their schools. They became role models for other teachers not only in terms of instructional innovation but also in fostering a work culture that supports positive change, as can be seen in Figure 5, where a teacher utilizes collaborative teaching materials developed through cross-school initiatives.



Figure 5: Teacher using Collaborative Teaching Materials

Overall, interview and observation data indicate that the “Guru Penggerak” Program has significantly strengthened teachers' collaboration and leadership competencies. Teachers who participated in the program not only experienced improvements in technical teaching skills but also evolved into leaders capable of driving change within their school environments. This had a positive impact on the collaborative climate and the overall quality of education in elementary schools in Bekasi. The program demonstrates great potential as a model for teacher professional development that can produce systemic and sustainable transformation.

Implementation Challenges of the Program

However, the challenge in implementing the “Guru Penggerak” Program is still significant. At Gugus Kranji V, there is not a single teacher who could pass the program because of tight administrative terms. It shows that although the program has a big potential, accessibility and readiness of the teachers became a problem that has to be dealt with. Most of the teachers feel troubled in fulfilling administrative requirements to join this program, therefore several collaboration potentials could not be optimized yet. As stated by the R4,

“I experienced technical challenges while registering, especially when I had to write an essay as a registration condition. I found it hard to deliver my ideas. Other than that, I also passed the deadline to upload the documents and it made me disappointed myself because I haven't maximized my effort.”

Another challenge is the sustainability of collaboration among schools often hampered by

time limits and resources. Although a study community has been formed, regular meetings among the teachers have not been fully organized well. It indicates there is a need for a stronger support system to make the collaboration effectively take place without any external obstacles.

Based on the results of observations in several schools, it was found that although teacher learning communities have been formed as part of the “Guru Penggerak” Program, the implementation of regular meetings has not yet run optimally. Many teachers admitted having difficulty scheduling meetings due to the busy teaching schedule and other administrative tasks. In addition, the lack of supporting facilities such as meeting rooms and adequate communication tools also became significant obstacles. On several occasions, learning community meetings even had to be canceled or postponed because there was no suitable time for the majority of members. This condition shows that without a strong support system and sufficient resources, the sustainability of inter-school collaboration becomes difficult to realize effectively. Therefore, support from schools and local governments in the form of time, space, and technology facilitation is highly needed so that collaboration can run smoothly without being hindered by external factors.

The “Guru Penggerak” Program also faces challenges in adjusting to local needs and cultural variation in every school. Several schools in Bekasi have different characteristics; therefore it is necessary to have a more flexible approach to implementing this program. The challenge for adaptation in several schools also affects the effectiveness of this program, especially in building

a strong collaborative network among teachers, as can be seen in Figure 6, which illustrates how

school culture influences the implementation of the “Guru Penggerak” Program.



Figure 6: School Culture Influencing the Implementation of the “Guru Penggerak” Program

Based on interviews with several “Guru Penggerak” in Bekasi, it was found that differences in characteristics and culture in each school influenced how they implemented the “Guru Penggerak” program. One teacher from the Kota Baru X cluster stated,

“Each school in this area has very different needs and challenges. For example, there are schools whose students come from families with full parental support, while other schools have many students who receive little attention from their families. In addition, school cultures are also very diverse; there are schools with a strong tradition of discipline and collaboration, but there are also those still struggling to build that culture. Due to these differing conditions, approaches or strategies applied uniformly in the “Guru Penggerak” program may not be effective or relevant for all schools. Therefore, flexibility and specific adaptation are needed so that this program can truly meet the needs of each school optimally.”

Another teacher added that flexibility in program implementation is very important so that the materials and methods taught can be adjusted to the local context of each school. This also affects the development of collaborative teacher networks, as the diversity of conditions causes some schools to adapt faster than others. In conclusion, without proper adjustments to local needs, the effectiveness of the program in creating strong collaboration among teachers can be hindered.

Overall, the “Guru Penggerak” Program in Bekasi had a significant impact on improving the collaboration competency among teachers, although there are still several problems that need to be solved. With stronger support from the policy, infrastructure, and training or trainings, this program has the potential to encourage bigger changes in the education system in Bekasi. This program is also expected to keep developing education leadership at elementary schools, which will contribute to education quality improvement in the future.

Discussion

According to the result of this research, there are several key findings that could be understood deeper in theory context, local dynamic, and relevance with previous studies. This discussion will discuss the implementation of the program, teachers’ motivation, effort to improve the program, and collaboration competency developed by the “Guru Penggerak”. Other than that, this discussion will be equipped with literature review and relevance theory to support interpretation of the research result.

Profile of “Guru Penggerak” collaboration competence

This research finds that the collaboration competency of the “Guru Penggerak” includes various dimensions, including communication skills, listening with empathy, negotiation skills, collaborative problem-solving, and conflict management. These dimensions are in line with

the teamwork competencies concept that emphasizes the success of collaboration depends on the capability of team members to have good communication, negotiate, and resolve conflict constructively.

Collaboration competency developed by the “Guru Penggerak” also shows conformity with 21st century skills needed in modern education. Collaboration skills, communication, and problem-solving are the core of 21st-century competency are important for teachers to create dynamic and innovative learning surroundings (28, 29). In this context, the “Guru Penggerak” Program in West Bekasi helped the teachers to develop these skills, although there are still several challenges for wider and more systematic implementation. Teachers’ motivation for participating in the “Guru Penggerak” Program could be grouped into three main categories: willingness to learn and self-development, convenience in PPG certification, and developing leadership skills. In line with self-determination theory intrinsic motivation, such as willingness to develop and learn, plays an important role in encouraging active participation in professional development programs. This motivation could be seen clearly in this research, where the teachers who participated have a strong orientation in developing teaching and leadership competency (30–34). Motivation to develop leadership skills is also a significant finding. The teachers who participated in “Guru Penggerak” Program see it as a potential way to become a leader at their schools. It shows the importance of the role of leadership developing program in education. Leadership skills contribution could be bigger in innovation and changes at school (35). “Guru Penggerak” Program could be seen as a part of leadership capacity development of the teachers to support sustainable education reformation.

Program to Strengthen “Guru Penggerak” Collaboration Competence

The finding of this research shows that implementing the “Guru Penggerak” Program in West Bekasi has several significant dynamics. Teachers at Gugus Kota Baru X who followed the “Guru Penggerak” Program successfully built a study community that has a role as a place for collaboration. It is in line with the Professional Learning Communities (PLC) concept, where the teacher collaboratively shares the best practice and improves their capacity as an educator (36–

38). Through PLC, teachers could develop their knowledge and skills sustainably in supporting and collaborative area. But this research also shows that although the program did not run, there is no structured regular meeting. It showed that there is a challenge in coordination and more organized collaboration facility. According to the communities of practice theory, the success of collaboration relies on the routine interaction, experiences exchange, and creation of shared meaning among members (39–41). In this context, study community was formed to show positive local initiative, but the effectivity could be improved if there is a lot of institution support and formal structure that facilitate more organized collaboration.

The findings of the research show that the effort to intensify the implementation of the “Guru Penggerak” Program is still limited. Although there is a collaboration initiative among individuals, this activity has not been structured well and the effectiveness has not been measured. Structured intervention and supported by strong facilitation tend to be more effective in improving teacher learning outcomes. In this context, more structured formal training and regular meetings that involve teachers in the study community could help to increase the success rate of this program (42).

Moreover, the lack of formal training and organized meetings shows that it is necessary to re-design the program to be more responsive to teachers’ needs and local situations. The importance of capacity building at schools is emphasized as an important step in increasing involvement and success of such innovative programs (43, 44). By strengthening the support from the institution and organizing more structured collaboration activity, the “Guru Penggerak” Program in West Bekasi could be optimized to have a wider and more significant impact on the teachers’ competency.

Implementation Challenges of the Program

The “Guru Penggerak” program has successfully fostered cultures of collaboration among elementary school teachers, significant challenges remain that inhibit the full realization of its collaborative goals. Based on field data and teacher interviews, several obstacles emerged that hinder sustainable and effective collaboration. These

include misaligned teaching schedules, lack of institutional support from schools, and divergent perspectives or teaching philosophies among educators. In particular, scheduling conflicts were commonly cited—teachers often struggle to find mutually available time to meet due to heavy workloads and administrative duties. Additionally, the lack of logistical support, such as dedicated meeting spaces or digital platforms for remote collaboration, further limits their ability to engage in meaningful professional dialogue (45).

Furthermore, a non-supportive work culture presents a more systemic challenge. In schools where collaboration is not yet embedded in the institutional ethos, teachers may feel isolated or discouraged from sharing and reflecting on their teaching practices. This is especially evident in schools with rigid hierarchical structures, where innovation and peer learning are not actively promoted. The absence of a structured and safe environment for open discussion often prevents teachers from fully engaging in peer-led initiatives, such as study groups or lesson study models (43, 46). To overcome these challenges, this study underscores the critical role of institutional leadership in facilitating collaboration. School principals, in particular, play a pivotal role as enablers of teacher collaboration. Their support, both moral and structural, is essential in creating the necessary conditions for collaborative activities to thrive. Principals can support collaboration by allocating time within the school schedule for professional learning communities, providing resources such as training materials and technology, and establishing a culture that values openness and collective growth (5–7). Furthermore, education supervisors and local education authorities should be actively involved in monitoring and supporting collaborative efforts, ensuring alignment with broader educational goals and policies (1).

Evidence from this study indicates that in schools where principals were actively involved in the “Guru Penggerak” initiative, collaborative practices were more sustainable and impactful. Teachers in these environments reported more frequent and meaningful exchanges of ideas, joint lesson planning, peer observations, and reflective discussions, which contributed to improved teaching effectiveness (19, 47).

The positive impact of the “Guru Penggerak” Program on teaching practice was consistently reported across multiple cases. Teachers described an increased ability to design and implement student-centered learning strategies, improved classroom management techniques, and more responsive interaction with student needs. Many attributed these improvements not only to the individual training modules provided by the program but also to the collaborative opportunities it fostered. Through professional dialogue and shared reflection, teachers were able to adapt best practices to their own classroom contexts and address challenges more creatively (48, 49).

This study contributes to the growing body of research on teacher professional development by providing empirical evidence of how the “Guru Penggerak” Program significantly enhances collaboration competency among elementary school teachers. The findings demonstrate the program’s effectiveness in building professional learning communities and promoting shared teaching practices across schools. The results also highlight the role of teacher leadership in driving innovation and improving instructional quality at the grassroots level. These insights have practical implications for policymakers in designing scalable programs to strengthen collaboration within the education system. Furthermore, the study emphasizes the need for flexible policy implementation to address local school contexts and cultural variations.

Conclusion

This research succeeded in revealing the significant impact of the “Guru Penggerak” Program on collaboration competency among elementary school teachers in Bekasi. The findings confirm that this program not only enhances collaboration and the exchange of teaching practices among teachers but also strengthens the effectiveness of professional learning communities at the school level. These results align with the research objective of analyzing the role of Guru Penggerak in fostering teacher collaboration as a foundation for sustainable professional development. From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to the discourse on teacher leadership and collaborative learning, highlighting

the relevance of nationally initiated professional programs in strengthening educational ecosystems. Practically, the results suggest that the Guru Penggerak Program can serve as a model for professional development that is scalable to other regions, provided that challenges related to time allocation, facilities, and program socialization are adequately addressed. Future research should further explore strategies for overcoming these obstacles, examine the long-term impact of the program on student learning outcomes, and conduct comparative studies with similar teacher leadership initiatives in other countries to broaden understanding of its uniqueness and potential for replication.

Based on the findings, two main recommendations are proposed. For practitioners, it is essential to provide structured training on collaboration and reflective practices so that teachers involved in the Guru Penggerak Program can maximize their roles as mentors, facilitators, and learning leaders within their schools. Such training will strengthen professional learning communities and sustain the culture of collaborative teaching. For policymakers, it is necessary to allocate specific workload arrangements that allow Guru Penggerak teachers to focus on mentoring and supporting their colleagues without being overburdened by administrative or excessive teaching duties. Ensuring adequate time and institutional support will optimize the program's impact and expand its benefits across schools.

Abbreviations

GTK: Guru dan Tenaga Kependidikan, MoECRT: Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, PGP: Program Guru Penggerak, PLC: Professional Learning Community.

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Author Contributions

This research was conducted through the collaborative efforts of all authors. Awiria: overall conceptualization, designed the study framework, developed the methodology, supervised the

research process, data collection, analysis, interpreted the findings, drafted the manuscript, carried out the final critical revisions, Asrori Yudhaprawira: refining the methodology, validating data accuracy, supporting the analysis, reviewing the manuscript content, Dariyanto: data collection, supporting the data analysis, manuscript editing, Evi Dalilah: organizing field data collection, managing documentation, supporting preliminary data processing, Sabrina Putri Salsabila: data transcription, prepared supporting materials, conducted literature reviews to enrich the study background, Laksmi Evasufi Widi Fajari: a critical academic review, manuscript refinement, added relevant references to strengthen the discussion. All authors have reviewed and approved the final version of the manuscript for submission to IRJMS.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

Declaration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) Assistance

This manuscript was prepared without the use of generative AI or AI-assisted technologies in the writing, editing, or analysis process.

Ethics Approval

The study was conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki, and approved by the Institutional Review Board of Universitas Bhayangkara Jakarta Raya (protocol code 2025/IRB-004 and date of approval: 12 Mei 2025).

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