

The Role of Guru Penggerak in the Implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in the Digital Era

Peran Guru Penggerak dalam Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka pada Era Digital

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Abstract

Guru Penggerak are educators who encourage students' comprehensive growth and development, actively and proactively guiding other teachers to implement student-centred learning. This research uses a qualitative approach, which will examine the role of Guru Penggerak in implementing the independent curriculum in the digital era. The method used in this research is the critical analysis method. This method aims to process the evaluation and assessment of a topic or idea by considering existing arguments and evidence. The research results show that Guru Penggerak, through an active and competent role in implementing the Merdeka curriculum, especially in the current digital era, can create a dynamic, interesting, and relevant learning environment for students. They help students develop the skills necessary to succeed in an ever-evolving digital world. They need to deeply understand the independent learning curriculum, analyze school needs and context, develop appropriate learning materials and resources, collaborate with fellow teachers, monitor and evaluate, and continue to improve their professionalism. By taking these steps, Guru Penggerak can become a driving force in implementing the independent learning curriculum in the digital era, which is more effective and successful in schools.

Keywords: mover teacher, free curriculum, digital age

Abstrak

Guru Penggerak adalah pendidik yang mendorong pertumbuhan dan perkembangan komprehensif siswa, secara aktif dan proaktif membimbing guru lain untuk menerapkan pembelajaran yang berpusat pada siswa. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif, yang mana pendekatan kualitatif ini akan meneliti tentang peran Guru Penggerak dalam implementasi kurikulum merdeka di era digital. Adapun metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah metode analisis kritis. Metode ini bertujuan untuk proses evaluasi dan penilaian terhadap suatu topik atau gagasan dengan mempertimbangkan argumentasi dan bukti yang ada. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Guru Penggerak dengan melalui peran yang aktif dan kompeten dalam implementasi kurikulum merdeka, apalagi di era digital saat ini, Guru Penggerak dapat menciptakan lingkungan pembelajaran yang dinamis, menarik, dan relevan bagi siswa. Mereka membantu siswa mengembangkan keterampilan yang diperlukan untuk sukses di dunia digital yang terus berkembang. Mereka perlu memiliki pemahaman yang mendalam tentang kurikulum merdeka belajar, menganalisis kebutuhan dan konteks sekolah, mengembangkan bahan dan sumber pembelajaran yang sesuai, berkolaborasi dengan rekan guru, melakukan monitoring dan evaluasi, serta terus meningkatkan profesionalisme mereka. Dengan melakukan langkah-langkah tersebut, Guru Penggerak dapat menjadi motor penggerak dalam implementasi kurikulum merdeka belajar di era digital, yang lebih efektif dan berhasil di sekolah.

Kata Kunci: Guru Penggerak, kurikulum merdeka, era digital

1. Introduction

Over time, the field of education has undergone many transformations, including advances in materials, learning media, and the integration of information and communication technology. Education is a dynamic interaction between educators and learners, which includes teaching materials, methodologies, and learning frameworks. The success of a class can be measured by the extent to which students understand the content provided. Meanwhile, developing and implementing well-designed curricula in educational institutions also plays an essential role in achieving educational goals (Tohir, 2020).

The curriculum serves as a basic framework to guide the implementation of education in a particular unit. It covers several areas, including subjects, learning systems and how to conduct student evaluations (Jannati et al., 2023a). In a different sense, the curriculum serves as a collection of essential materials facilitating learning. It provides clear guidance to teachers on effectively fulfilling their function as educators in various teaching and learning activities (Suardipa, 2020).

Over time, the curriculum experienced a new chapter after Nadiem Anwar Makarim became the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia (Mendikbud RI); he argued about increasing freedom of learning. "Giving freedom and autonomy to educational institutions, and independence from bureaucratization, lecturers are freed from complicated bureaucracy, and students are given the freedom to choose the fields they like," said the Indonesian Minister of Education and Culture. The policy named "Merdeka Belajar-Kampus Merdeka" was issued based on this expression. The main objective of the Merdeka Belajar-Kampus Merdeka policy is to optimize the ability of teacher education graduates and teaching staff in each school to effectively provide an exciting and enjoyable learning experience (Dewa et al., 2022). These initiatives aim to facilitate collaboration between schools and campuses to generate innovative ideas that will lead to transformative change in education.

Implementing the *Merdeka* Curriculum aims to perfect the shortcomings of the previous curriculum without changing our educational ideology. The goal is to perfect our education system to be in line with today's progress (Misbah et al., 2022). However, schools that do not have sufficient instruments and expertise to implement the Merdeka Curriculum are still allowed to implement the 2013 Curriculum. This is done to further improve their abilities, so that, in the end, they can meet the requirements of schools designated to become driving schools, which also include *Guru Penggerak*.

Guru Penggerak are educators who promote students' comprehensive progress and development, energetically and proactively guiding other teachers to implement student-centred learning. They also serve as catalysts for change in the surrounding community, particularly in improving the Pancasila Learner Profile among students (Jannati et al., 2023b). Because of the importance of their role, *Guru Penggerak*, who have received proper training, should be able to fulfil the expectation of being role models. They should act not merely as teachers but as educators responsible for imparting knowledge and skills to students. In addition, they should provide guidance and direction to foster students' moral character and critical thinking skills, enabling them to engage effectively in learning in the independent curriculum (Mulyasa, 2021).

In the Industrial Revolution 4.0 period, which is characterized by a focus on the concept of independent learning, it is very important for all educational institutions to have competitiveness and breakthroughs to collaborate effectively and avoid being left behind. In the era of the Industrial Revolution 4.0, the education system is expected to be able to produce students who have critical thinking skills, the ability to solve problems, creativity, innovation, and effective communication and cooperation skills (Yamin et al., 2020).

The concept of *Merdeka Belajar* emerged as a reaction to the demands of the education system during the Industrial Revolution 4.0. Nadiem Makarim, Minister of Education of the Republic of Indonesia, emphasized the importance of teachers in fostering freedom of thought, which in turn enables freedom of learning. The statement was reported by tempo.com in 2019. Students are not only instructed to memorize and recall knowledge. However, they are encouraged to develop critical thinking skills independently and unrestrictedly. The *Guru Penggerak* engages in teaching to promote not only the transmission of knowledge but also to encourage the intellectual and spiritual development of his or her students (Makhtum, 2023).

As education regulations evolve, *Guru Penggerak* must be able to adapt to these policies. In acquiring knowledge, the *Guru Penggerak* plays a crucial and significant role. The *Guru Penggerak*, as a professional, must have the ability to provide quality education to foster a generation that is knowledgeable and ethical and has global competitiveness (Patabang & Murniarti, 2021). To adapt to the new rules, mobilizer teachers must be able to shift from the old paradigm. To face the Industrial Revolution 4.0, teacher-leaders must improve their pedagogical skills to guide and teach students to use their cognitive abilities effectively. *Guru Penggerak*, who has autonomy in their teaching approaches, can provide stimuli that effectively engage students' thinking skills and foster their creative potential in line with individual talents and abilities (Dewa et al., 2022).

However, by looking at the reality at this time, the *Guru Penggerak* mostly takes care of administration rather than carrying out his main task as an educator. This is clarified by an appeal from Indonesian President Joko Widodo (Jokowi), who said: "I have emphasized this many times regarding the administrative burden on teachers. Teachers do not focus on teaching and learning activities but are more used for administrative matters. Please underline this". In this case, Indonesian President Joko Widodo (Jokowi) assessed that most teachers now do not prioritize their teaching duties because they are too often taking care of administrative matters at school. Therefore, the excessive workload imposed on teachers is an essential problem in Indonesia's education sector (Jingga, 2020).

With this, although administrative tasks are essential in education, they should not be the main focus for teacher activists. As agents of change, they should focus more on improving the quality of learning in schools and supporting the development of teacher and student competencies. Therefore, the government needs to provide adequate support for *Guru Penggerak*, including support in reducing the burden of administrative tasks and providing more space for *Guru Penggerak* to work on developing the quality of learning in schools (Khoirin et al., 2023).

So, in this situation, to realize a *Merdeka* curriculum, especially in an increasingly massive digital era, the education curriculum needs to transform to remain relevant and able to meet the demands of the times. The *Merdeka* Curriculum is faced with the need to further integrate technology into the learning process, giving rise to the need for teachers who can drive these changes. Therefore, the government held a *Guru Penggerak* program as part of an effort to improve the quality of education in Indonesia. Given its essential and heavy role, in outline, the author wants to examine further the role of the *Guru Penggerak* in implementing the *Merdeka* curriculum in the digital era (Manalu et al., 2022).

2. Literature Review

According to the Ministry of Education and Culture, a *Guru Penggerak* is someone who acts as a leader in the learning process, applies the concept of independent learning, and coordinates the entire educational ecosystem to create learner-centered education and develop a learner leadership program to realize the profile of Pancasila students (Samsinar et al., 2023). According to Manizar (2017), a teacher as a motivator should have five attitudes: being open, helping students maximize *Guru Penggerak* have an important role in providing freedom of learning to students, encouraging creativity in the school environment, and providing diverse learning resources, so that students can actively develop and foster positive character (Samsinar et al., 2023).

The role of *Guru Penggerak* is expected to be an agent of change in the world of education in their area by taking the following steps: 1) Mobilizing a learning community for fellow teachers in the school and in the region; 2) Becoming a teacher of practice for other teacher colleagues related to learning development in schools; 3) Encourage increased student leadership in schools; 4) Open space for positive discussions and collaboration between teachers and stakeholders inside and outside the school to improve the quality of learning; 5) Become a learning leader who encourages the welfare of the educational ecosystem in schools (Kusumah & Alwiyah, 2021).

3. Research Methods

This research uses a qualitative approach. A qualitative approach is a research method that focuses on examining objective situations in their natural state, without manipulation or influence from researchers, to understand the dynamics of the subject matter under study (Yulianah, 2022). This qualitative approach will examine the role of the *Guru Penggerak* in implementing the *Merdeka* curriculum. The author uses this approach because of the alignment between the problems identified and the desired objectives. That is, the author intends to describe objectively and systematically through descriptive analysis of the research results from the answers to the problem formulations that have been focused on and determined.

The method used in this research is the critical analysis method. This method aims to evaluate and assess a topic or idea by considering existing arguments and evidence. Critical analysis involves the ability to identify strengths and weaknesses in an argument, as well as being able to construct better arguments based on relevant evidence and logical thinking (Rositawati, 2018).

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Research Results

In today's digital era, there is a demand for speed and complexity in all aspects. All aspects, including education in Indonesia, must adapt to the changing times in order not to fall behind its Southeast Asian neighbors. To align with the growth of today's students, schools in Indonesia must incorporate technology into their teaching and learning activities, as conventional approaches are considered monotonous and unsuitable. *Guru Penggerak* must be consistent in innovating so that students do not become disinterested in the learning process. However, they are also charged with the responsibility of assisting school administration to expedite teaching and learning efforts (Sumarsih et al., 2022).

The utilization of technology can improve the learning system and school administration by facilitating effective learning and improving students' understanding of the topics to be taught. According to the Minister of Education and Culture, Nadiem Makarim, freedom of learning is

synonymous with freedom of thought, and this fundamental principle is essential for teachers to realize. This points to the need to free teachers from the heavy responsibilities of school administration, which are too burdensome so that they can concentrate on instilling character values, morality and knowledge in children (Suryaman, 2020).

In discussing *Guru Penggerak*, we need to understand how important the role of teachers is in growing the quality of education in Indonesia. Supporting and empowering teachers through programs such as *Guru Penggerak* is meaningful in achieving this goal. So, in this case, the author will elaborate on the results and discuss them in several sections:

4.1.1 Problems of the *Guru Penggerak*

Indonesia is a country that applies a pedagogical approach to education, where the *Guru Penggerak* acts as a facilitator in independent learning. The *Guru Penggerak* in *Merdeka belajar* is someone who can guide students in their holistic development while demonstrating critical thinking and encouraging creative expression. The lead teacher in independent learning must have the ability to implement a student-centred learning approach, in order to effectively achieve the desired results of Pancasila Student Profile education (Jannati et al., 2023a).

Nadiem Makariem, Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia, highlighted that a critical element in the transition of independent learning education is the role of the *Guru Penggerak*. The *Guru Penggerak* not only adheres to the prescribed curriculum but also strives to modify all educational activities to meet or uphold the standards of the Pancasila Learner Profile. This profile includes students who are loyal and pious, have good ethics, demonstrate high creativity, collaborate effectively, embrace global diversity, engage in critical thinking, and demonstrate independence. The *Guru Penggerak*, who facilitates learning must be able to effectively manage today's expectations. This includes embedding character education as a foundation for students to make wise decisions when faced with the complexities of a rapidly evolving world. In addition, *Guru Penggerak* should encourage critical thinking when evaluating and responding to the wealth of information at their disposal (Sumarsih et al., 2022).

A *Guru Penggerak* is an educator who guides other teachers in facilitating independent learning to encourage the full development of student's abilities. *Guru Penggerak*, in independent learning, must have the skills to manage the learning process effectively. In addition, they need to establish good relationships with students in the school community by utilizing existing technology. This is important to improve the quality of learning. In addition, *Guru Penggerak* should engage in continuous reflection and evaluation to improve their current teaching methods continuously. *Guru Penggerak* should have the capacity and determination to be a role model capable of positive transformation in their educational institutions and other schools (Riowati & Yoenanto, 2022).

In an era like this, some teaching staff are still burdened with school administration, so they prioritize administrative tasks over the formation of children's character and morals. In addition, the absence of adequate facilities and infrastructure significantly impacts efforts to improve education in Indonesia (Yamin et al., 2020).

The main role of a *Guru Penggerak* is not only taking care of school administration, but teachers also have an essential task in improving the quality of education in their school. Unfortunately, sometimes, in carrying out their duties, a *Guru Penggerak* is faced with various obstacles, such as limited resources and time available, as well as overlapping tasks with other tasks that must be carried out. It is just that in an era like this, some teaching staff are still burdened with school administration, so they prioritize administrative tasks over the formation of children's

character and morals. In addition, the absence of adequate facilities and infrastructure significantly impacts efforts to improve education in Indonesia (Lubis et al., 2022).

The main role of a *Guru Penggerak* is not only taking care of school administration, but teachers also have an essential task in improving the quality of education in their school. Unfortunately, sometimes, in carrying out their duties, *Guru Penggerak* faces various obstacles, such as limited resources and time available, as well as overlapping tasks with other tasks that must be carried out. This can make a *Guru Penggerak* more focused on completing the school administration for which he or she is responsible. However, they must also prioritize improving the quality of education in their schools, which can be achieved through training and self-development, monitoring and evaluating learning, and collaborating with other teachers and teaching staff. Therefore, the government needs to provide adequate support for *Guru Penggerak*, including support in reducing the burden of administrative tasks and providing more space for *Guru Penggerak* to work on developing the quality of learning in schools. They also need to optimize their time and resources to carry out their responsibilities more effectively and efficiently, including dealing with administrative tasks. To overcome these problems, research by Riowati & Yoenanto (2022) shows that many efforts can be made, namely:

- a. Increase the availability of resources: The government and related agencies need to provide adequate resources to help *Guru Penggerak* with administrative tasks, such as using information and communication technology (ICT) to facilitate the administrative process.
- b. Improving the capacity of *Guru Penggerak*: *Guru Penggerak* need to be provided with training and coaching to have sufficient capacity to handle administrative tasks. The school or the government can conduct this training and coaching.
- c. Optimizing time: *Guru Penggerak* need to manage their time well so that they can take care of administrative tasks as efficiently as possible so that the available time and energy can be optimized for other activities, such as supporting the development of teacher and student competencies.
- d. Involving other parties: *Guru Penggerak* can involve other parties, such as school administrators or administrative staff, to help with administrative tasks.

By following these procedures, the lead teacher is expected to focus more on his or her duties as a driver or agent of change in improving the quality of education in schools and supporting the development of teacher and student competencies.

4.1.2 Can the *Guru Penggerak* Run the *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum?

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia (Kemendikbud Ristek RI) immediately started the "Merdeka Belajar" curriculum to provide opportunities for students to explore their skills. In addition to the prerequisite that students have technological proficiency, an independent learning curriculum can also be caused by the tedious nature of one-way teaching. Monotonous learning inhibits students' ability to display their skills and capacities (Khoirin et al., 2023).

This is also caused by the constraints on the concept of curriculum implemented by both educators and students. Students must constantly strive for the highest grades, often using a variety of means without thoroughly assessing their talents. Students have unquestionable expertise in their respective disciplines. The emergence of a *Merdeka* curriculum also facilitates the growth of optimal education in Indonesia (Lubis et al., 2022).

The idea of *Merdeka Belajar* is not new to education. Countries such as America, Brazil and the Philippines have long embraced this philosophy. The birth of the idea of *Merdeka Belajar* in

Indonesia can be traced back to the appointment of Nadiem Makarim as Minister of Education. This concept is rooted in the basic principle of intellectual freedom, which aims to foster an educational environment that is fun and free from pressure to achieve specific values or grades (Widayati & Amalia, 2020). Before teaching students, teachers must first cultivate the idea of *Merdeka Belajar* in their minds.

The Association of American Colleges & Universities (AAC&U) once said: "Academic freedom implies not only freedom from constraints but also freedom for faculty and students to work in a scholarly community to develop the intellectual and personal qualities that citizens need in a vibrant democracy and a strong economy." Every teacher should be able to create a conducive and independent learning environment for their students. This allows students to engage in discussions with their teachers, thus improving their understanding and knowledge. In addition, students are expected to demonstrate courage, independent thinking, proficient social skills, ethical behaviour, and proficiency in critical thinking (Suardipa, 2020).

We all know that an effective education system gives students the freedom to discover and develop their talents and capacities. This approach allows students to learn freely, fostering a new classroom environment that nurtures their critical thinking, inquiry and creativity. In the realm of independent learning, educators or teachers need to foster a culture of collaboration among students while encouraging the development of innovative questioning skills related to concepts and challenges in various scientific fields (Wagner, 2018).

Individuals with creative tendencies actively engage in imagining and investigating alternative possibilities, using multiple ways of thinking. An important method is needed to build a solid academic foundation to enhance their cognitive abilities, which include "soft skills" such as understanding, empathy, and communication proficiency. The utilization of diverse learning materials and diverse sources allows students with varied learning styles to understand knowledge optimally (Manalu et al., 2022). Multifaceted interactions between students and teachers facilitate learning. To acquire knowledge independently, students should have unlimited opportunities to engage in play, and exploration, overcome boredom, discover their interests, and actively pursue those interests. The program effectively nurtures students' analytical and critical thinking skills, focusing on examining and assessing contrasting views. Students' ability to acquire knowledge requires teachers' freedom to teach; these two concepts are interconnected. The existing education system should include innovative methodologies and tactics that can effectively facilitate educational goals and provide freedom in learning and teaching (Sumarsih et al., 2022).

Implementing the *Merdeka* curriculum facilitates the equitable distribution of education in Indonesia, in line with the government's favourable policy to serve students in disadvantaged, frontier and outermost (3T) areas. In addition, the *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum will also modify the learning approach that was previously conducted in the classroom and shift it towards learning activities conducted outside the classroom. Engaging in learning experiences outside the classroom will provide students with more significant opportunities to dialogue and interact with their teachers. Engaging in learning experiences outside the classroom has a significant impact on children's character development. It fosters the courage to articulate viewpoints during conversations, improves socialization skills, and fosters academic competence, ultimately leading to a more rounded character (Dewa et al., 2022).

The *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum assesses students' talents and skills based on grades and considers their civility and proficiency in specific scientific fields. Students are given the freedom to develop their innate abilities. This encourages student creativity and will be demonstrated through teacher assistance. The need for teachers to have the ability to create inventive educational

concepts for children will also be met (Mulyasa, 2021). The concept of a *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum involves collaborative efforts between teachers and students to develop dynamic and efficient learning approaches. For more details, see the following table, which shows an example of the breakthrough of the concept of independent learning.

Tabel. 1. The concept of *Merdeka Belajar*

No	Rencana	
1	Supervision of the implementation of the National Standardized School Examination (USBN) can be done by the respective school authorities.	
2	Minimum Competency Assessment and Character Survey should take the role of the National Examination (UN) system.	The <i>Merdeka Belajar</i> curriculum is characterized by the slogan " <i>Merdeka Belajar, Guru Penggerak.</i> "
3	Produce smart, competent learners to become the nation's human resources and virtuous.	
4	Shorten the Learning Implementation Plan (RPP) to one page.	
5	The primary purpose of the New Learner Admission Policy (PPDB) is to enforce the zoning system that does not include the 3T zones (disadvantaged, frontier, and outermost).	

Research conducted by Marisa (dalam Nasution (2022), Nadiem Makarim, in his role as Minister of Education, Culture, Research and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia (Kemendikbud RI), has introduced an innovative approach to fostering an optimal and enjoyable learning environment. This approach aims to reduce the pressure on teachers and students to focus solely on achieving high grades and scores or meeting minimum completion requirements. Learning is expected to be enhanced in terms of convenience and effectiveness, as students can engage in direct discussions with their teachers, explore subjects outside the classroom, and foster qualities such as independence, courage, intelligence, sociability, courtesy, and competence. By having these qualities, students will be able to become human resources who can contribute to the nation's progress. In addition, students will also gain proficiency in reading, knowledge, skills, attitudes, and use of technology. Students are also given freedom of thought and can actively seek and acquire information from any source. The presence of this curriculum is driven not only by the challenges of the learning process but also by technological advances and the digitalization era that requires more competent human resources (Lubis et al., 2022).

The *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum empowers teachers to design instructional and enjoyable learning experiences. Teachers must have the ability to demonstrate and implement the learning process in order to have qualified pedagogical competence. Teachers are responsible for acting drivers in designing, implementing, assessing, and monitoring the assessment process (Sutrisno, 2022). Implementing dynamic, inventive, and fun learning must be able to meet the demands of today, especially in the present. Teachers must also act as facilitators to foster students' personalities, critical thinking, creativity, innovation, effective communication, collaboration, and strong moral values. In addition to students' independence in accessing learning materials such as e-books, teachers must develop appropriate learning approaches, especially in the *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum. The Blended Learning model is a viable option for teachers to implement in their teaching (Manalu et al., 2022).

The blended learning model is considered optimal for a pedagogical approach in the independent learning curriculum. Because, in developing competencies, students still prioritize character development through traditional or face-to-face learning. This model integrates face-to-face (offline) and virtual (online) learning. It enhances the learning process by integrating multiple delivery methods, teaching models, and learning styles and offers a wide selection of conversation media, thus providing convenience and flexibility. If students have difficulty understanding the content presented at face-to-face meetings, they can query the teacher through online channels, such as chat, email, or other forms of interactive communication, such as Zoom meetings. This model further offers a comprehensive examination of innovative approaches to meeting educational requirements. By having the freedom to innovate, students can comfortably hone their abilities and competencies through actions, attitudes, decisions, and methods (Wijoyo, 2020).

The notion of "Merdeka Belajar" may seem comprehensible and articulate, but its implementation can prove very challenging. Commitment, independence and capacity to perform are essential qualities that support each other and are not mutually exclusive. Dedication and independence in acquiring knowledge are fundamental principles for achieving educational goals. However, their practical application can be challenging. *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum does not impose specific performance goals, and learning innovations certainly take time. Students want different performances derived from the influence of a teacher. In terms of competencies acquired, students are not only limited to classroom learning but also allowed to explore alternative educational environments. The competencies obtained by students do not stand alone; they appear along with the learning environment they have set (Suryaman, 2020).

4. 1.3 The Role of *Guru Penggerak* in the Implementation of *Merdeka* Curriculum in the Digital Age

The emergence of the Industrial Revolution 4.0 and Civilization 5.0 has had a significant impact on several aspects of human life, causing disruptive technical advances and innovations, especially in education. Teachers have considerable constraints in the current era of technological turmoil due to the ease of access to information and learning tools. However, it cannot be denied that teachers cannot be completely replaced by advanced technology because technology is the result of human thinking that tends to be wrong, prone to error, and potentially misused. Technology is essentially inimitable, as it lacks emotion and humanity (Makhtum, 2023).

Education is a process that takes place both at home and at school. Parents act as the principal teachers of education at home, while teachers act as the principal educators at school. It is true that Nadiem Makarim's statement in 2019 that Education is what happens in the classroom and at home. Technology cannot replace that connection. There has to be an inner connection for it to continue and for the teaching and learning process to be more effective". Regardless of technological advancement, a teacher's job cannot be replaced because a teacher's interaction with students has a unique quality that technology does not have. Given the rapid pace of technological advancement, it is incumbent upon teachers to engage in continuous research and learning to keep pace with technological advancement. This ensures that their knowledge remains current and prevents students from falling behind in the use and understanding of technology. Teachers must have the necessary skills to effectively teach and supervise students utilizing technology, which can significantly enhance the learning experience (Mulyasa, 2021).

Teachers must be able to improve their skills to keep up with the rapid technological advances. Teachers must demonstrate adaptability by effectively leading and instructing students to prepare them for the challenges of the Industrial Revolution 4.0 (Murniarti et al., 2021). To face

the Industrial Revolution 4.0, educators must be able to change their cognitive framework. Educators must have a forward-thinking perspective in improving the overall quality of education. Improving the quality of students requires a significant focus on the proficiency and competence of teachers, who function both as teachers and educators. Only educators who have exceptional competence can nurture exceptional quality learners. The role of a teacher is more than just imparting knowledge to students; teachers must also be role models and leaders in shaping the future of education (Riowati & Yoenanto, 2022).

Guru Penggerak are not limited to fulfilling their educator responsibilities by creating lesson plans and presenting content to students. They must also be determined and able to take charge, introduce new ideas, and implement modifications (Murniarti et al., 2021). Learning independence teachers must be able to teach and supervise learning proficiently utilizing available technology. In addition, they should have English language proficiency to enhance the educational experience and continuously reflect and improve the learning process (Pendi, 2020). As a *Guru Penggerak*, it is essential to have the capacity to generate unique and dynamic approaches to educate students effectively. In addition, fostering strong relationships between educators, schools, and the wider community is essential in fostering a learning culture and empowering individuals to drive positive transformation. The role of the mobilizer teacher in education (Kemendikbudristek, 2023):

- a. Teachers function as mobilizers in the educational community for their colleagues in the school and beyond. The function of the *Guru Penggerak* is to serve as a coach for other teachers. Including a *Guru Penggerak* is expected to facilitate positive change for motivated teachers, particularly in improving the quality of student teaching and fostering teacher freedom in self-development.
- b. The *Guru Penggerak* has the responsibility to educate other teachers in the implementation of student-centred learning. Motivated teachers to inspire and guide their students must have the ability to create and oversee an attractive learning environment to foster student motivation and encourage creativity according to their talents and abilities. Children's intrinsic desire empowers them to improve their academic performance independently.
- c. The *Guru Penggerak* is a driver to improve the quality of student leadership within the educational institution.
- d. The *Guru Penggerak* should provide a platform for dialogue and collaboration with other teachers and individuals or groups involved in teaching in the school, both internally and externally, to enhance the learning experience.
- e. The *Guru Penggerak* should act as a mentor during the learning process, fostering a serene and harmonious environment in the educational setting. A comfortable learning environment fosters the development of students with critical thinking skills, creativity, moral integrity and a tolerant mindset.
- f. Engage in continuous self-improvement. *Guru Penggerak* must continuously improve their skills to keep abreast of the latest developments. Teachers must have the ability to improve and expand their skills as educators independently.
- g. As a motivator, teachers act as learning motivators by stimulating learning activities. The *Guru Penggerak* must be a role model who can guide.

The *Program Pendidikan Guru Penggerak* (PPGP) is a continuous professional development program that includes training and teacher collective activities. The program aims to equip teachers with the necessary expertise in leadership learning and pedagogy, enabling them to effectively engage and mobilize learning communities within and beyond the school environment.

In addition, *Guru Penggerak* can emerge as educational authorities capable of fostering a sense of comfort and contentment among students within their respective educational settings. The *Guru Penggerak* program uses online training, seminars and individual mentoring as its paradigm. The distribution of activities consists of 70% work-based learning, 20% peer learning and 10% learning with resource persons, facilitators and practising teachers.

Meanwhile, the purpose of teacher recruitment is to obtain high-quality teachers. The intended targets are educators working at various levels of education, including kindergartens, elementary schools, junior high schools, high schools, vocational schools, and special schools. *Guru Penggerak* must complete the selection process at each level in order to meet the standards to become a *Guru Penggerak* (Sumarsih et al., 2022).

In addition to their significant contribution to education, *Guru Penggerak* also plays an important role in implementing the independent curriculum. In research by Kusumawardani (2023), the *Guru Penggerak* is the key to success for successfully implementing the Merdeka curriculum. Some of these tasks include:

- a. Motivate children to achieve outstanding performance based on their talents and interests.
- b. Have the ability to inspire their students to achieve based on their talents and interests. The Merdeka curriculum is based on the idea that students learn based on individual abilities and interests.
- c. Motivate students to improve their reading and math skills.
- d. The learning activities carried out by the *Guru Penggerak* are expected to improve children's reading and counting skills. The Merdeka curriculum focuses on two core skills and encourages students' all-round development.
- e. Promotes comprehensive student progress.
- f. Able to support comprehensive student development.
- g. Teaches creatively.
- h. The operation of creative teaching methods is a must for *Guru Penggerak*, using a variety of teaching resources according to the needs of the students.
- i. Proactively improve proficiency.
- j. Proactively improve their skills to utilize their skills in assisting the implementation of the Merdeka curriculum.

By actively and proficiently implementing the independent curriculum, especially in today's digital age, *Guru Penggerak* can create a dynamic, engaging and relevant learning atmosphere for students. They assist students in cultivating essential talents to thrive in the ever-changing digital world.

5. Conclusion

Some points that can be concluded in this research are as follows:

- a. A *Guru Penggerak* must prioritize improving the quality of education in his or her school, which can be realized through various activities such as training and self-development, monitoring and evaluating learning, and collaboration with other teachers and teaching staff. Therefore, the government needs to provide adequate support for *Guru Penggerak*, including support in reducing the burden of administrative tasks and providing more space for teacher mobilizers to work on developing the quality of learning in schools. To overcome these problems, many efforts can be made, namely: 1) increase the availability of resources, 2) increase the capacity of *Guru Penggerak*, 3) optimize time, and 4) involve other parties.
- b. The *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum empowers teachers to design instructional and enjoyable learning experiences. Teachers must have the ability to demonstrate and implement the

learning process in order to have qualified pedagogical competence. Teachers are responsible for acting as a driving force in designing, implementing, assessing, and monitoring the assessment process. Implementing dynamic, inventive, and fun learning must be able to meet the demands of today, especially in the present. In addition to students' independence in accessing learning materials such as e-books, teachers must develop appropriate learning approaches, especially in the Merdeka Belajar curriculum. The Blended Learning model is a viable option for teachers to implement.

- c. To face the Industrial Revolution 4.0 educators must be able to change their cognitive framework. Educators must have a forward-thinking perspective in improving the overall quality of education. Improving the quality of students requires a significant focus on the proficiency and competence of teachers, who function both as teachers and educators. Only educators who have exceptional competence can nurture exceptional quality learners. The role of a teacher is more than just imparting knowledge to students; teachers must also be role models and leaders in shaping the future of education.

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