

# The Sekolah Penggerak Program in Improving the Quality of Education at SMP Muhammadiyah 8 Surakarta

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**Abstract.** This research aims to find out and examine the *Sekolah Penggerak* program in improving the quality of education at SMP Muhammadiyah 8 Surakarta. This research was qualitatively conducted using a phenomenological approach at SMP Muhammadiyah 8 Surakarta. Data collection used several techniques, such as interviews and observation. The informants were the principal and teachers of SMP Muhammadiyah 8 Surakarta. The results revealed the *Sekolah Penggerak* program's influence in improving education quality. In the program, many innovations are needed to improve. *Sekolah Penggerak* makes teachers and principals understand the learning process by understanding students' abilities and potential. The school principal, who is also a leader, must be able to organize and control the activities in the *Sekolah Penggerak* program. The success of the *Sekolah Penggerak* program can serve as an example and inspiration for other schools to implement similar programs. Teachers in *Sekolah Penggerak* can provide fun and exciting learning for students with various activities through P5 (Project of Strengthening Pancasila Student Profiles).

**Keywords:** Implementation  $\cdot$  Quality of Education  $\cdot$  the Sekolah Penggerak Program

# 1 Introduction

The quality of education in a country defines the country's progress. Therefore, education can determine a person's quality of life. Education can also contribute to the economic growth and development of a nation. In education, every effort of educators in educating students is specifically regulated, formulated, and has been arranged in general rules, such as "education for survival". Education is formed and prepared for students to survive in a society with changing times [1].

The vision of national education realizes an education system as an institution that is authoritative and strong to make students qualified and proactive in responding to the challenges of an increasingly advanced era. Meanwhile, the national education mission is to strive for equity, expansion, and development of educational facilities, improve education quality, increase educational institutions' accountability and professionalism, and empower the community as an education administration [2]. Article 1 No. 20 of 2003 concerning SISDIKNAS explains that education is a conscious means and effort to create a learning process for students to play an active role in developing their intellectual and personal potential. Students are expected to develop intelligent personalities, noble characters, and practical skills that benefit themselves and society due to their educational experience. A developed country prioritizes improving the quality of education for its citizens. Currently, concerns have arisen about the quality of education in Indonesia, which is quite apprehensive.

According to a 2020 survey by CEO World, regarding countries with the best education in the world, Indonesia's education quality is concerning, with a score of 46.6%. Indonesia is ranked 70th in the world [3]. Due to inadequate learning facilities, teaching resources, weak educational administration, and a shortage of quality teaching materials, the education quality in Indonesia is relatively low compared to other countries.

Education in Indonesia has undergone several curriculum changes to improve the previous curricula, which began in 1947 and, most recently, the 2022 *Kurikulum Merdeka*. *Kurikulum Merdeka* aims to strengthen the achievement of the Pancasila student profile through learning activities with project activities (project-based learning). So that learning is more relevant and interactive. With the quality of education in Indonesia, which is low compared to other countries, many aspects are inhibiting the progress of education in Indonesia. According to Kurniawan, students, the role of a teacher, the environment, economic conditions, facilities, and infrastructure are some of the determining factors for a country's education quality success [4].

Currently, Indonesia continues to strive to improve the quality of education. Several new policies and various flagship programs by the Indonesian Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology were launched in 2019 to improve the quality of education in Indonesia. One of its flagship programs is the *Sekolah Penggerak*, launched by the Indonesian Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology on February 1, 2021. *Sekolah Penggerak* is the 7th episode of the independent learning program by holding a selection of school principals starting from the Early Childhood education level, Elementary School, Middle School, and Vocational School. Selection for the first batch of the *Sekolah Penggerak* program was held at the beginning of 2021 for the 2021/2022 school year [5].

Sekolah Penggerak is a refinement of the previous school transformation program. It will accelerate public/private schools in all conditions to move 1–2 stages more advanced. The program is carried out in stages and integrated with the ecosystem. In the end, all schools in Indonesia will implement the same program. Stakeholders and the Ministry of Education and Culture need to work together to create learning innovations to realize the best education for all students in Indonesia. These innovations must be relevant and have a good impact on achieving main goals and improving the quality of learning. Good quality education will make the nation more advanced and developing [6].

*Sekolah Penggerak* aims to encourage the schools 1 step further ahead. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology conducted five planned, consistent, gradual, well-evaluated and interrelated interventions in the *Sekolah Penggerak* program. The five interventions are as follows:

1. Consultative and Asymmetric Assistance

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The Ministry of Education and Culture assists *Sekolah Penggerak* with funding and support from the Office of Education, Culture, Research and Technology.

2. Strengthening Human Resources in Schools

The Ministry of Education and Culture provides an intensive one-on-one training and coaching program for school administrators, heads of departments, and classroom teachers.

3. Learning with a New Paradigm

Learning takes place inside and outside the classroom to develop competence and character development through Pancasila values.

4. Data-Driven Planning

School-based management: planning based on institutional analysis.

5. Digitizing Schools

Various digital platforms facilitate simplification, efficiency, creativity, inspiration, and customized approaches.

## 2 Literature Review

In the Great Dictionary of the Indonesian Language, implementation means an application. Implementation depends on a system's action, activity, action, or mechanism. Implementation is a planned activity to achieve the objectives set [7]. Effective network implementation is required to expand activities that adjust the interaction process between goals and actions to achieve them [8].

The Sekolah Penggerak program is an effort to realize the vision of Indonesian Education in realizing a developed Indonesia that is sovereign, independent and has personality through the creation of Pancasila. Sekolah Penggerak focuses on developing student learning outcomes holistically, including competence (literacy and numeracy) and character, starting with excellent human resources (principals and teachers). Sekolah Penggerak is a new policy the Ministry of Education and Culture formulated to improve the schools' quality.

The quality of education is a general concept and overall characteristic of education services internally and externally, demonstrating their ability to meet the expected or implied needs, including the input, process and output of education. Furthermore, the quality of education is the ability of the basic education system, both from an administrative point of view and in terms of the educational process, which is directed effectively to maximize output by maximizing added value and input factors [9].

# 3 Methodology

This study used a type of qualitative research. Scientifically, qualitative research aims to understand a phenomenon in a natural social context by prioritizing in-depth interaction between the researcher and the phenomenon being studied. Qualitative research produces descriptive data in speech, behavior, or writing from research subjects who are observed using primary and secondary data sources. Primary data sources directly provide data to data collectors, such as the Principal of SMP Muhammadiyah 8 Surakarta, Mr. Rusmanto, S.Pd, M.Pd I and SMP Muhammadiyah 8 Surakarta teachers. Secondary data sources

do not directly provide data to data collectors but see other people or use documents. Secondary sources used in this research included journals, articles, books, theses, the internet and other relevant literature.

The phenomenological methodology was used for this study. Phenomenology examines subjective conscious states, including perceptions, emotions and knowledge. A phenomenon refers to the state of being aware of something new [10]. Phenomenology is a branch of qualitative research that focuses on studying knowledge obtained through conscious experience or developing an understanding of a phenomenon or series of events through one's subjective interpretation [11]. Data were obtained through interviews, observation and documentation studies. After conducting interviews, observations, and data collection, the results of the discussion and conclusions were found.

### 4 Result and Discussion

#### 4.1 Background of SMP Muhammadiyah 8 Surakarta

Sekolah Penggerak is a government program in episode 7 of independent learning. SMP Muhammadiyah 8 Surakarta which is located on Jl. Sri Kuncoro No.12, Danukusuman, Serengan District, Surakarta, is the only Muhammadiyah Middle School in Surakarta, part of a *Sekolah Penggerak*. SMP Muhammadiyah 8 Surakarta passed as one of the A (Excellent) accreditation schools based on letter No.1359/BAN-SM/SK/2022. SMP Muhammadiyah 8 Surakarta has become a *Sekolah Penggerak* since July 2021, part of Batch I.

The background of SMP Muhammadiyah 8 Surakarta participating in the Sekolah Penggerak program is as follows:

- 1. To improve the quality of education at SMP Muhammadiyah 8 Surakarta.
- 2. The Principal of SMP Muhammadiyah 8 Surakarta likes to take on new challenges because, in the *Sekolah Penggerak* program, there are many interventions from the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture, starting from learning and non-learning problems.
- 3. Creating innovations in the student-based *Sekolah Penggerak* program at SMP Muhammadiyah 8 Surakarta. Students get facilities to develop their talents and interests.

The selection steps carried out by the Principal of SMP Muhammadiyah 8 Surakarta to become a *Sekolah Penggerak* are as follows:

- 1. Register.
- 2. Complete the administration, which involves approval from the foundation.
- 3. Stage 1: Write an essay test on how the Principal's steps are to improve the progress and quality of the school.
- 4. Stage 2: Take Scholastic Aptitude Test and Microteaching Test.

Since the 2021/2022 academic year, SMP Muhammadiyah 8 Surakarta has officially become a *Sekolah Penggerak* that implements the *Kurikulum Merdeka* for grades 7 and 8, while grade 9 still uses the 2013 curriculum. Muhammadiyah Middle School has 1 special class, a women's class and 3 class programs, called regular classes, IT

class, and tahfidz class. The *Sekolah Penggerak* program involves all school activists in carrying out its implementation. Principals, teachers, students, parents of students, and the surrounding community play a major role in the *Sekolah Penggerak* program. Then, in the second year, SMP Muhammadiyah 8 Surakarta started collaborating with several outside parties. For example, on National Heroes' Day, November 10, 2022, an outing class was held in collaboration with *Penggiat Pecinta Lingkungan Solo*, whose activity was spreading fish seeds in the Keprabon River, Banjarsari with *Bank Sampah Kerja Nyata kota Solo Raya*. This activity implements the *Kurikulum Merdeka* under the theme: Sustainable Lifestyle.

Meanwhile, the role of the Principal in implementing the *Sekolah Penggerak* program at SMP Muhammadiyah 8 Surakarta is as follows:

- 1. As a manager, the Principal must be able to plan, manage resources, carry out activities, and assess their effectiveness. The Principal requires to make predictions about the school, such as qualities that the community will value for innovation by taking the initiative and engaging in creative activities to advance the organization and school progress and develop strategies and policies to achieve school goals with a focus on long-term strategies with find resources, teaching materials, and infrastructure facilities for learning [12].
- 2. As a leader, the Principal is responsible for organizing and supervising all activities related to the *Sekolah Penggerak* program. The extent to which schools can develop and the quality of education can improve depends on the Principal's leadership style [13].
- 3. As a learning leader, the Principal must understand learning and can provide an overview to the teacher to arouse enthusiasm for teaching and learning and conduct face-to-face coaching clinics with teachers. The Principal as a teacher, is given additional tasks with administrative responsibility to improve school quality [14]. Future Principal candidates in the *Sekolah Penggerak* program must have a certificate so he knows about learning development centers. Principals also continue to look for breakthroughs, including the CID (Central Of Instructional Development) program as a center for learning development.
- 4. The Principal carries out innovations to realize the vision and mission of the *Sekolah Penggerak* program.

The role of the teacher in implementing the *Sekolah Penggerak* program at SMP Muhammadiyah 8 Surakarta is as follows:

- 1. The teacher always presents a positive nuance. They provide a lesson in class, give advice, set an example and become a pleasant place for students. Teachers with students hope like parents with children. So 'my school is my home, my school is my heaven, my teachers are my parents' slogan can be realized.
- 2. In *Kurikulum Merdeka*, the teacher is not a source of learning. Still, the teacher is a facilitator, and learning is not only in the classroom but also carried out outside the classroom or outing classes, such as in mosques, historical sites, and the surrounding environment.
- 3. Teachers teach learning materials and instill character education to strengthen Pancasila's student profile.

4. Realizing differentiated learning, a series of common-sense decisions made by teachers that focus on the needs of students to assist each student in developing abilities. Through the *Sekolah Penggerak* program, SMP Muhammadiyah 8 Surakarta promotes PIKEM GEMBROT learning (Active, Innovative, Creative, Effective, Fun, Happy and Strong Learning).

The role of students' parents in implementing the *Sekolah Penggerak* program at SMP Muhammadiyah 8 Surakarta is as follows:

- 1. As learning resources, parents are directly involved with activities or programs in SMP Muhammadiyah 8 Surakarta.
- 2. Parents as a partnership with the school, which not only helps from a moral standpoint but parents of students also help pay for facilities and infrastructure at school.
- 3. Parents and the school work together to realize the school's vision and mission for the school's progress.

#### 4.2 Implementation of 5 Sekolah Penggerak Interventions

The *Sekolah Penggerak* program at SMP Muhammadiyah 8 Surakarta, with its 5 interventions, has been going well by making innovations to improve the quality of education.

1. Consultative and Asymmetric Assistance

A school is an object. Schools receive workshop materials, coaching clinic training, and PMO or Project Management Office, routinely carried out monthly by SMP Muhammadiyah 8 Surakarta with Expert Trainers (PA). This activity is carried out to discuss, reflect, evaluate and supervise *Sekolah Penggerak*'s project-based or projectlearning activities. So, schools receive materials and training that are carried out offline and online. All activities are attended independently by the Principal and the learning committee team for the *Sekolah Penggerak* program.

2. Strengthening Human Resources in Schools

The most prominent activity of the Sekolah Penggerak program at SMP Muhammadiyah 8 Surakarta is strengthening human resources in learning. Every morning the Principal holds breaking news or a briefing with the teacher to provide motivation, find solutions to problems that occur in the hope that there will be no miscommunication or delivery of inappropriate messages, provide the latest positive information in the world of education where good quality education lies on the quality of teachers, and the quality of good teachers lies in the quality of their pedagogical competence. The ability to manage and carry out learning and assess and improve student progress is essential for educators [15].

3. Learning with a New Paradigm

Differentiated learning begins with a diagnostic assessment of the independent curriculum carried out specifically and diagnoses learning styles appropriate for students. Then, determine the media and learning methods or models. If analyzed, the purpose of strengthening differentiated learning is more student-centered education [16].

Kinesthetic learning is learning in its implementation with direct activities on learning resources. A kinesthetic learning style requires physical interaction with the subject matter [17]. Learning can be carried out in or outside the classroom, for example, by outing class, auditory or learning by listening, and visual or learning styles by seeing directly.

Learning does not only rely on curriculum decisions, but the most important aspect lies in the process, where the learning process follows students' needs and developmental stages.

The role of educators in the learning process is required to guide, educate, supervise, direct, motivate, and facilitate students so that they can play an active and creative role in achieving the expected goals. One way to optimize students' potential in learning activities is to involve students to play an active role in the learning process [18].

4. Data-Driven Planning

Data-based planning uses education report cards. The Principal of SMP Muhammadiyah 8 Surakarta becomes one of the sources from private schools regarding the digital report card platform held throughout Surakarta. The results of the education report card for SMP Muhammadiyah 8 Surakarta can be accessed directly on the digital report card platform. Every year, grade 8 participates in the ANBK or Computer-Based National Assessment, followed by 45 children (5 children as a backup). The results of the school's ANBK show that the literacy competence of SMP Muhammadiyah 8 Surakarta is still below the minimum competency, the numeracy competency is achieved above the minimum competency, and the competence character develops and is cultured.

Through the digital education report card platform, schools can find out which competencies have been achieved and which have not been achieved so that schools can try to achieve the existing minimum competency standards. As happened in SMP Muhammadiyah 8 Surakarta, literacy competence is still below the minimum standard, so teachers must pay more attention to the learning process so that students have more interest in reading. So, SMP Muhammadiyah 8 Surakarta intervenes in school programs by looking at digital education report cards.

- 5. Digitizing Schools
  - 1) SMP Muhammadiyah 8 Surakarta has IT (Information and Technology) program classes for grades 7, 8 and 9 as school digitization.
  - 2) Student Digital Monitoring will look at students' activities while at home. Monitoring the 5 daily prayers through *Mesra* (Child-Friendly School Mentoring) cards monitoring which are checked and monitored every day by the teacher or homeroom teacher, learning activities doing school assignments and helping parents report with photos via the WhatsApp digital platform in class groups by parents of participants educate.
  - 3) Digital Teacher Monitoring to improve teacher competence: every day, there is a report on Al-Quran reading, and teachers are required to read 1 day 1 juz.

The activities of the Sekolah Penggerak program at SMP Muhammadiyah 8 Surakarta are as follows:

1. Intracurricular is all teaching and learning process activities carried out in schools under the structure of the independent curriculum program to achieve learning objectives.

- 2. The P5 (Project of Strengthening Pancasila Student Profiles), conducted by SMP Muhammadiyah 8 Surakarta in November 2022, is as follows:
  - 1) The P5 learning activity (Project of Strengthening Pancasila Student Profiles) with the theme: Build Mind and Body "Healthy Living Without Smoking" was held on Friday, November 4, 2022, at SMP Muhammadiyah 8 Surakarta. This activity is in collaboration with the Kratonan Health Center.
  - 2) The P5 learning activity (Project of Strengthening Pancasila Student Profiles) with the theme: Sustainable Lifestyle "Waste is the Source of My Ideas" was held on Monday, November 7, 2022, at SMP Muhammadiyah 8 Surakarta. This activity collaborates with the Movement for Young People Concerned with Waste and the Environment in Solo.
  - 3) The outing class activity for SMP Muhammadiyah 8 Surakarta students commemorating National Heroes' Day was held on Thursday, November 10, 2022, by "Spreading Fish Seeds" on the Keprabon River, with Bank Sampah Kerja Nyata Solo. This activity implemented *Kurikulum Merdeka* with the theme: Sustainable Lifestyle.
  - "Perform and Exhibition of Children's Work" was carried out by SMP Muhammadiyah 8 Surakarta students and was held on Sunday, November 27, 2022, at the New Solo Car Free Day.

The Sekolah Penggerak at SMP Muhammadiyah 8 Surakarta continues to create innovations to improve the quality of education. From the results, the innovations that have been created and are running well at SMP Muhammadiyah 8 Surakarta are as follows:

1) Class innovation at SMP Muhammadiyah 8 Surakarta has several class programs such as IT class, girls-only special class, and *tahfidz* class. IT classes start in grades 7, 8 and 9. There is only 1 class for girls, limited to 40 students. Tahfidz classes start in grades 7 and 8. This class is different from other classes. The tahfidz class is held every first hour until the 5th hour. The students perform murojaah activities and memorize Al-Qur'an. Then for teaching and learning activities, the teacher delivers the material after the 5th hour. Every day all classes are required to carry out sunnah dhuha prayers according to the hourly schedule of each class.

The tahfidz class also has activities that are conducted once a month, called the "Khataman Al-Quran" activity, which is accompanied by the teacher and homeroom teacher, students who have the most memorization deposits will get rewards or awards to motivate students to be more enthusiastic about achieving the more memorized targets.

- 1) Modis (Student Digital Monitoring) is a superior innovation in SMP Muhammadiyah 8 Surakarta through the *Mesra* card (Mentoring Child-Friendly Schools). Schools can monitor student activities while at home with several indicators:
  - a. Monitoring obligatory prayers and sunnah prayers
  - b. Monitoring Al-Quran reading with a target of reading how many verses a day
  - c. Monitoring good moral behavior.
  - d. Monitoring helps parents with activities at home

According to Pancasila students' profiles, Modis (Student Digital Monitoring) is a strategy to improve students' competence and character. Modis won 1st place at the Central Java provincial level in 2021 as an innovation from *Sekolah Penggerak*.

#### 1) Perbaqu (Acceleration of Reading Al-Quran)

*Perbaqu* (Acceleration of Al-Quran Reading) is a method of reading the Koran developed by the AIK (Al-Islam and Kemuhammadiyahan) SMP Muhammadiyah 8 Surakarta team in the *Perbaqu* method, which targets students who cannot read the Koran. Students are expected to be able to read the Qur'an under the rules. Previously, teachers had been trained before teaching students. The AIK (Al-Islam and Kemuhammadiyahan) SMP Muhammadiyah 8 Surakarta team also tested and researched this method to get the expected results.

The *Perbaqu halaqah* at SMP Muhammadiyah 8 Surakarta is held every Monday to Thursday in the first class and allocated time 2x30 minutes in each meeting. *Perbaqu halaqah* is conducted in each classroom, accompanied by one or two teachers. Then, students who can read the Koran carry out memorization murojaah or special memorization deposits for *halaqah tahfidz* in the school prayer room.

The results obtained from the *Perbaqu halaqah* were effective. Students at SMP Muhammadiyah 8 Surakarta can learn to read the Koran easily and gradually, starting from the most basic, called *hijaiyah* letters, followed by continuous *hijaiyah* letters, then tajwid to improve the ability and quality of reading the Koran students.

#### 4.3 Obstacles and Success Factors in the Sekolah Penggerak Program

Obstacles at SMP Muhammadiyah 8 Surakarta as a Sekolah Penggerak are as follows:

- 1. Inadequate costs or funds to build school facilities for learning activities
- 2. Adjustments in the new curriculum related to preparing learning administration according to the guidelines on the independent curriculum
- 3. Training for teachers while applying the new paradigm of learning

The success factors of SMP Muhammadiyah 8 Surakarta as a *Sekolah Penggerak* are as follows:

- 1. Principals and teachers work together to implement the *Sekolah Penggerak* program to improve the quality of education at SMP Muhammadiyah 8 Surakarta
- 2. Parents of students support the *Sekolah Penggerak* program at SMP Muhammadiyah 8 Surakarta
- 3. School principals and teachers receive workshops, training and guidance from expert trainers from the Surakarta City Education Office while implementing the *Sekolah Penggerak* program

The necessary information is needed in the input process to conduct the educational process properly and plan, so the quality of the educational input can be of good quality. The quality of this input includes human resources consisting of teachers, students and employees. It can also involve facilities and infrastructure supporting the learning process comfortably and easily understood. There is also educational planning to predict what will be done during the educational process [19].

Benefits for SMP Muhammadiyah 8 Surakarta to become a Sekolah Penggerak:

The Sekolah Penggerak program at SMP Muhammadiyah 8 Surakarta greatly improves education quality, as seen from the achievements obtained with the highest number of students among the Muhammadiyah Middle Schools in Surakarta and several innovations and activities. SMP Muhammadiyah 8 Surakarta has implemented the program properly and followed the objectives of the Sekolah Penggerak program to realize the vision of Indonesian Education in realizing a developed Indonesia that is sovereign, independent, and has personality through the creation of Pancasila Students and increased cooperation Memorandum of Understanding (Mou) between SMP Muhammadiyah 8 Surakarta with external parties such as Community Health Centers, organizations, communities and the Department of Education in Surakarta in carrying out the P5 program (Project of Strengthening Pancasila Student Profiles).

#### 5 Conclusion

From the results and discussion, the *Sekolah Penggerak* program has improved the quality of education at SMP Muhammadiyah 8 Surakarta. SMP Muhammadiyah 8 Surakarta can be a role model and inspiration for other schools in Surakarta, especially Muhammadiyah Junior High School. The success is inseparable from the hard work and perseverance of the Principal and teachers of SMP Muhammadiyah 8 Surakarta and the support of the parents, the school committee and the surrounding community. In implementing the *Sekolah Penggerak* program, many innovations are needed with various P5 programs (Project of Strengthening Pancasila Student Profiles). *Sekolah Penggerak* makes teachers and Principals understand the learning process by understanding students according to their abilities and potential with PIKEM GEMBROT learning (Active, Innovative, Creative, Effective, Fun, Happy and Strong Learning). The Principal must be able to organize and control the activities of the *Sekolah Penggerak* program. From the results, there is much conformity with the results of previous studies, the similarities in increasing the quality of education from schools that are members of the *Sekolah Penggerak* program, such as SMP Muhammadiyah 8 Surakarta.

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Author's Contribution. This study recommends that the government and the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology continue working together to develop the *Sekolah Penggerak* program. Schools, principals, and teachers who are members of the program continue to innovate both in learning and non-learning to achieve the objectives and realize the vision of Indonesian Education that is sovereign, independent, and has personality through creating Pancasila Students to improve the quality of education.

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