

Implementation of Teachers' Emotional, Moral, and Spiritual Competencies Through the *Guru Penggerak* Program

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
Article history: Submission December 26, 2024 Revised January 10, 2025 Accepted September 15, 2025 Published October 16, 2025 Keywords: <i>Competency,</i> <i>Emotion,</i> <i>Morality,</i> <i>Spirituality,</i> <i>Guru Penggerak Program.</i> 	The <i>Guru Penggerak</i> Program at the first secondary school of Muhammadiyah 15 Surabaya aims to develop teachers' emotional, moral, and spiritual competencies to shape educators with a holistic, high-quality character. This study seeks to describe and critically analyze strengthening teachers' emotional, moral, and spiritual competencies by implementing the <i>Guru Penggerak</i> Program. Employing a qualitative case study approach, data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation. A thematic analysis was conducted to understand how to enhance teacher competencies. The findings reveal that the <i>Guru Penggerak</i> Program has significantly contributed to developing emotional, moral, and spiritual competencies among teachers. Teachers demonstrated improved emotional regulation, empathy, and the ability to foster a positive learning environment. Morally, they exhibited exemplary values such as honesty, responsibility, and justice. Their spiritual competence also improved by integrating Islamic values into the teaching and learning. The program's positive impact is reflected in enhanced teacher-student relationships, leadership styles, and a more collaborative school culture. However, challenges remain, including time constraints and limited support, which must be addressed for the program's full potential. Conclusion: The <i>Guru Penggerak</i> Program effectively strengthens teachers' emotional, moral, and spiritual competencies, thereby enhancing the quality of education and character formation, despite challenges related to time and support.



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A. INTRODUCTION

The challenges in education are becoming increasingly complex, as evidenced by the rapid and intense technological advancements in the era of globalization (Bassar et al., 2021).

Educators must possess enhanced competencies in academic capabilities and in strengthening emotional, moral, and spiritual competencies (Hernawati & Mulyani, 2023). These competencies are essential in creating a holistic learning environment, where the learning process fosters students' cognitive, emotional, moral, and spiritual development (Wahid & Hamami, 2021). In this process, educators play a crucial role in shaping students' character and personality; thus, reinforcing educator competencies in these areas is both important and critical (Zulhimma, 2020).

Teacher competence is pivotal in ensuring the quality of education, as it directly affects student learning outcomes and overall academic achievement (Channa & Sahito, 2022; Martínez-Izaguirre et al., 2021). A competent teacher not only masters the subject matter (Content Knowledge/CK) but also possesses pedagogical skills (Pedagogical Knowledge/PK) and the ability to integrate both within the learning context (Pedagogical Content Knowledge/PCK) (Bouley et al., 2015). Additionally, relational competence is important, where teachers establish positive relationships with students through empathy, respect, and active engagement, significantly impacting motivation and learning success (Jensen et al., 2015). Another challenge is the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application, which can be addressed through experience-based assessments and deep reflective practices (Dahlback et al., 2020).

Technological development and the shift towards online learning have also highlighted the weaknesses in teachers' digital competencies. Many teachers feel unprepared to design and deliver online materials effectively, impacting their effectiveness and willingness to teach on digital platforms (Döş, 2025). Therefore, continuous professional development is necessary to ensure educators keep pace with current educational practices and technology, including collaboration, networking, and governance (Urbani, 2020; Ludwikowska, 2019). Moreover, it is important to formulate a clear and mutually agreed-upon teacher competency framework as a guideline for pre-service education and in-service training (Pimenta, 2023; Sánchez-Tarazaga & Matarranz, 2023). Effective educational policies should also be grounded in empirical research on the impact of teacher competencies on teaching quality and student learning outcomes (Kaiser & König, 2019).

Government efforts to improve teacher competencies are manifested, among others, through the Teacher Leader Program initiated by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Safrudin & Anshory, 2018). This program aims to nurture and empower teachers to become learning leaders capable of fostering positive changes within school environments (Aditiya & Fatonah, 2023). Besides serving as role models, Teacher Leaders are also expected to cultivate strong and resilient character traits (Al Farisi et al., 2021). The first secondary school, Muhammadiyah 15 Surabaya, is part of the Muhammadiyah school network that upholds Islamic values and is firmly committed to character development for its students (Suwandi & Permatasari, 2021). This development focuses on academics and strengthening spiritual, moral, and emotional dimensions (Amalia, 2019). Therefore, this school's teachers must master emotional, moral, and spiritual competencies to nurture intelligent and virtuous Muslim generations.

The Teacher Leader Program at the first secondary school, Muhammadiyah 15 Surabaya, is expected to serve as a medium for enhancing teacher competencies, particularly in emotional management, moral value implementation, and spiritual strengthening (Aziz, 2022). Emotional competence is vital for teachers to appropriately manage emotions and foster positive interactions within the school environment (Erlita & Abidin, 2021; Kurniawan & Yuliani, 2022). Meanwhile,

moral competence is the foundation for instilling ethics and character in students, as reflected through teachers' role modelling and guidance in decision-making (Bassar et al., 2021). On the other hand, spiritual competence enables teachers to incorporate religious values in the learning process (Giantara et al., 2022). As a faith-based school, the first secondary school, Muhammadiyah 15 Surabaya, emphasizes integrating Islamic values in teaching and learning activities, so that students excel academically and develop strong spiritual awareness (Binti & Chasanah, 2021).

Implementing the Teacher Leader Program at the first secondary school, Muhammadiyah 15 Surabaya, aims to improve teachers' professional competencies and strengthen the educational process's emotional, moral and spiritual dimensions (Chomsatul Farida et al., 2024). Strengthening these three aspects is crucial for teachers to fulfil their roles as ideal role models, academically and in shaping student character (Cikaa, 2020). Teachers who can exemplify holistic role modelling positively impact the development of students' attitudes and behaviours, both within and outside the school environment. The expected outcome of this program's implementation is creating an educational environment that supports the emergence of intellectually intelligent graduates, strong in character, morally upright, and spiritually aware (Dara et al., 2021).

This study addresses a gap in research related to the effectiveness of the Teacher Leader Program in strengthening teachers' non-academic competencies, particularly emotional, moral, and spiritual aspects, which have been underemphasized in program evaluations. The novelty of this research lies in its context of program implementation in an Islamic-based school like the first secondary school, Muhammadiyah 15 Surabaya, which emphasizes the integration of religious values in learning. This study aims to identify the Teacher Leader Program's impact on teachers' holistic character strengthening and uncover challenges faced during its implementation. The findings of this research are expected to provide a basis for developing more comprehensive educational policies and offer strategic recommendations for optimizing similar programs, so that they not only enhance teachers' academic competencies but also reinforce the foundation of character as holistic educators.

B. RESEARCH METHODS

This study was conducted from September 17 to October 18, 2024, employing a qualitative approach with a case study design to describe the strengthening of teachers' emotional, moral, and spiritual competencies through the Teacher Leader Program. The case study method was chosen because it allows for an in-depth and comprehensive exploration of phenomena and the identification of processes within a specific temporal and spatial context. This approach aims to understand the phenomenon holistically from the subjects' (teachers') perspective and the socio-cultural context of their work environment (Faridi, 2020). An in-depth exploration was carried out to uncover experiences, perceptions, and the program's implementation influencing the strengthening of academic and non-academic teacher competencies (Fadli, 2021). The case study focused specifically on the implementation of the Teacher Leader Program at the first secondary school, Muhammadiyah 15 Surabaya, to obtain rich data regarding the program's successes, challenges, and impacts on teachers (Aditiya & Fatonah, 2023; Dzofir, 2020).

Data were collected using three main techniques: in-depth interviews, direct

observations, and documentation (Muslimah, 2024). The in-depth interviews aimed to comprehensively understand teachers' perceptions and experiences of strengthening emotional, moral, and spiritual competencies during the program implementation (Husna, 2022). Observations were conducted to monitor teacher-student interactions and the application of these competencies during the learning process (Ibnu Prayoga et al., 2024). Documentation included training modules, teacher progress reports, and other relevant documents (Jastisia Jasmin et al., 2023). Data analysis was performed using thematic analysis to identify the main themes emerging from the qualitative data related to strengthening teacher competencies (Kurniasih et al., 2023). The researcher categorized and interpreted the findings to gain a deep understanding of the influence of the Teacher Leader Program. The validity and reliability of the data were ensured through triangulation techniques, by comparing data from various sources and conducting member checks with respondents (Maulana, 2019; Maulana, 2022).

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Implementation of the Teacher Leader Program at the first secondary school, Muhammadiyah 15, Surabaya

The first secondary school, Muhammadiyah 15 Surabaya, which was founded on Islamic values, prioritises forming Islamic character as its primary mission. Teachers are expected not only to impart knowledge but also to instil moral and spiritual values in accordance with Islamic teachings (Komariah et al., 2021). Implementing the Teacher Leader Program represents a strategic opportunity to strengthen the role of teachers in realizing this vision. By enhancing emotional, moral, and spiritual competencies, teachers are expected to become agents of change who positively impact students and the overall school environment (Faizin et al., 2023). These competencies foster a holistic educational climate, enabling students to develop fully intellectually, emotionally, morally, and spiritually. Consequently, the program supports the formation of strong character and a conducive learning environment aligned with the Islamic values upheld by the school.

a. Application of Teachers' Emotional Competence

Teachers' emotional competence is crucial in creating a positive and conducive learning climate within the school environment. Teachers who manage their emotions effectively cultivate a harmonious work atmosphere and promote productive collaboration among colleagues. Moreover, teachers demonstrating high emotional competence serve as role models for students in managing emotions, patience, and empathy, thereby supporting the development of students' character and emotional well-being. A school environment influenced by teachers' emotional skills becomes an emotionally safe learning space, allowing students to grow academically and socially optimally. This aligns with previous findings emphasizing the importance of teachers' emotional competence in supporting effective learning processes and character formation among students (Hakim, 2018). Ongoing professional development opportunities that emphasize emotional competence play a crucial role in helping teachers adapt to the ever-evolving demands of education and continuously enhance their teaching practices (Carstensen et al., 2019; Madalińska-Michalak & Bavli, 2018; Ha et al., 2025). Emotional competence in teaching influences various aspects, including teacher well-being, classroom management, teacher-student relationships, and overall educational outcomes.

Therefore, integrating emotional competence training into teacher education and continuous professional development programs is essential for fostering a supportive and effective learning environment (Fincias et al., 2018; Savina et al., 2025; Chernicoff & Labra, 2024).

b. Application of Teachers' Moral Competence

Moral development occurs through stages from orientation to rule compliance towards awareness of universal moral principles. Teachers hold a central role as exemplary figures who consistently implement moral values in daily interactions while fostering an ethically grounded school environment. Moral values are integrated into the curriculum through various approaches such as discussions, reflections, and case studies, reinforcing students' understanding of the essence of moral actions. Additionally, teachers provide moral guidance that supports students in making appropriate and responsible decisions. These efforts strengthen students' character development and create a school culture that upholds values such as cooperation, respect, and responsibility, reflecting the application of universal moral principles in the educational context.

c. Application of Teachers' Spiritual Competence and Integration of Islamic Values in Learning

According to Zohar and Marshall (2000), spiritual intelligence is the ability to address issues related to life's meaning and values and connect oneself with something greater than the self (Sudi et al., 2017). Teachers with high spiritual competence exemplify honesty, patience, and compassion, and can create a classroom atmosphere conducive to character formation. This competence is vital in helping students understand moral values and develop noble character. Thus, teachers not only perform the function of instructors but also act as mentors and sources of inspiration for students to find life's meaning and live according to actual values. This role makes the educational process more meaningful by focusing on cognitive aspects and students' holistic moral and spiritual development.

2. Implications of the Teacher Leader Program at SMP Muhammadiyah 15 Surabaya

- a. Impact on Teacher-Student Relationships: Enhancing teachers' emotional, moral, and spiritual competencies significantly and positively impacts the quality of relationships between teachers and students. Teachers with heightened emotional sensitivity and strong moral integrity can build positive, supportive, and empathetic relationships with students, creating a conducive learning atmosphere. Within such an environment, students feel valued, heard, and holistically supported academically, emotionally, and spiritually. Findings indicate that students become more open in expressing personal issues or concerns to teachers, strengthening their emotional bond. This warm and supportive relationship further increases student engagement in learning, promoting academic success and holistic character development.
- b. Strengthening Self-Awareness and Emotional Regulation, strengthening teachers' self-awareness and emotional regulation through the Teacher Leader Program has a notably positive effect (Novita et al., 2022). Teachers become more attuned to their emotions and more effective in managing stress and challenges encountered during the learning process

(Rosni, 2021). This change is reflected in teacher-student interactions, particularly in handling conflicts or difficult situations in the classroom (Samad et al., 2024). Findings show that most teachers report improved ability to manage emotions when dealing with problematic students. They can restrain negative emotions and redirect their energy toward understanding students' backgrounds, fostering a more harmonious classroom atmosphere. This underscores the crucial role of emotional competence in supporting effective classroom management and positive interpersonal relationships between teachers and students.

- c. **Strengthening Morality and Ethics in Teaching**, the Teacher Leader Program emphasizes the importance of integrity and morality in teaching practice (Setiyawan et al., 2021). Research indicates that teachers have improved their understanding and application of moral values within the school environment, including honesty, responsibility, discipline, and empathy toward students (Dalimunthe et al., 2023; Kurniasih et al., 2023). Findings reveal that teachers are more consistent in upholding principles of fairness and honesty in the classroom, reflected in equitable assessments and increased concern for students with low achievement or personal difficulties. This reinforcement of moral values supports creating a more inclusive and supportive learning environment while strengthening the role of teachers as ethical role models for students.
- d. **Strengthening Spirituality and Integration of Islamic Values in Learning**, as an Islamic-based school, strengthening teachers' spirituality emerges as the most influential aspect in this study. The Teacher Leader Program is key in enhancing teachers' understanding of spiritual values in their profession and integrating religious values into the learning process. Teachers become more sensitive to the spiritual dimension in their interactions with students and actively instil religious values across various learning activities. Findings show that teachers more frequently connect subject matter with Islamic teachings and utilise specific moments to instil spiritual values such as patience, gratitude, and sincerity in their work. Furthermore, teachers often provide real-life examples relevant to Islamic principles, helping students understand academic concepts and internalize moral and spiritual values deeply.
- e. **Changes in Teachers' Leadership Style**, the Teacher Leader Program emphasizes the role of teachers as effective learning leaders. Research shows that teachers who participate in this program undergo significant changes in leadership style, shifting from authoritarian or directive approaches to more inclusive and participative ones. Teachers now provide more opportunities for students to express opinions, collaborate, and actively explore their creativity. Findings indicate that most teachers have started implementing student-centred teaching methods by allowing greater student participation in class discussions and group projects. Additionally, teachers strive to develop students' character through self-reflection and meaningful interactions, ensuring that the learning process focuses not only on academics but also on fostering attitudes and values that support holistic student development.
- f. **Reinforcement of Teacher-Student Relationships**, enhancing teachers' emotional, moral, and spiritual competencies, significantly improves the quality of teacher-student relationships. Teachers with high emotional sensitivity and moral awareness can establish positive, supportive, and nurturing relationships, creating a conducive learning

environment where students feel valued, heard, and comprehensively supported. Findings show that students become more willing to share personal problems or concerns, sensing that teachers care not only about academic performance but also about their emotional and spiritual well-being. Such warm and supportive relationships increase student engagement in learning, ultimately promoting optimal academic achievement and holistic character growth.

3. Challenges and Obstacles in the Implementation of the Program

Although the Teacher Leader Program has demonstrated many positive outcomes, this study also identified several challenges in its implementation, particularly related to time constraints and teacher commitment. Some teachers reported difficulties balancing the program's demands with their daily teaching responsibilities. Additionally, obstacles arose from a lack of support from school management and limited essential resources needed to run the program optimally. Several teachers expressed that the time allocated for program training often conflicted with administrative duties and routine teaching activities, causing stress and fatigue. This situation indicates the need for improved coordination and support from the school administration to ensure the program runs more effectively and sustainably. Without strengthened management support and adequate resource provision, the program's implementation may face significant barriers that could hinder the comprehensive achievement of teacher competency development goals.

Islamic Religious Education teachers participating in the Teacher Leader Program reported a shift in their perspective on their educator roles. They no longer focus solely on delivering academic content but also feel the need to serve as role models in emotional, moral, and spiritual aspects. The training emphasized building empathetic relationships with students through two-way communication and wise emotional regulation. Teachers integrated moral values such as honesty, responsibility, and discipline into their lessons by providing real-life examples in daily actions. In the spiritual domain, Islamic religious education teachers apply concrete practices such as encouraging collective prayer before and after lessons and connecting teaching materials with religious values. This approach not only educates students academically but also fosters strong character development. However, teachers face challenges such as limited time to fully meet the personal needs of students and resistance from some students toward the character-building approach implemented.

From the perspective of the school principal, teachers who have completed the Teacher Leader Program exhibit significant changes in their interactions with students and colleagues, becoming more reflective and proactive in creating a learning environment focused on character formation. The program also fosters a collaborative work culture, particularly in developing a curriculum grounded in moral and spiritual values. The principal actively involves teacher leaders in mentoring their peers to promote broader adoption of these values throughout the school. However, challenges arise due to differing levels of understanding between teachers who have participated in the program and those who have not, resulting in uneven adoption of these values. Furthermore, pressure to meet academic targets often reduces attention to character development among students. To address these obstacles, the principal encourages value-based workshops for all teachers and fully supports teacher leaders in implementing innovative projects. Overall, the success of the Teacher Leader Program in

developing teachers' emotional, moral, and spiritual competencies heavily depends on ongoing support and synergy among all stakeholders within the school environment.

D. CONCLUSION

Implementing the Teacher Leader Program at the first secondary school, Muhammadiyah 15, Surabaya, significantly strengthens teachers' emotional, moral, and spiritual competencies. Teachers participating in the program demonstrated improved abilities to manage their emotions effectively, creating a conducive and harmonious learning environment. Enhanced emotional competence enabled teachers to serve as role models in patience, empathy, and self-regulation, positively impacting their interactions with students and colleagues. Furthermore, teachers increasingly applied moral values consistently in their teaching and daily behaviour, such as honesty, responsibility, discipline, and professional ethics. This reinforced a school culture grounded in moral principles and contributed to the holistic character development of students. On the spiritual dimension, the program helped teachers deepen their understanding and integration of Islamic values into the learning process, positioning them not only as academic instructors but also as spiritual mentors and sources of inspiration for students. This fostered students' spiritual awareness and solid religious values. However, the study also identified several challenges, including teachers' limited time to balance program training and daily duties and suboptimal support from school management. Differences in understanding among teachers also posed obstacles to uniformly adopting program values. Overall, the Teacher Leader Program has a significant positive impact in shaping holistic teachers who are both professional and character-strong. Continuous support from the school and synergy among teachers are key to the successful comprehensive implementation of this program.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

- Author 1 : Formulate the problem, theoretical framework, and research methodology.
- Author 2 : Collecting primary data and validating research instruments.
- Author 3 : Analyze data and interpret the results.
- Author 4 : Conduct a literature review and preliminary data processing.
- Author 5 : Drafting findings and editing the final manuscript until it is ready for publication.

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