

The Role of *Guru Belajar Nusantara* Community in Improving Teacher Competence

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Abstract

The enhancement of teacher competence is a crucial responsibility that lies with the educators themselves. Given the ever-evolving challenges faced by students, including learning difficulties, bullying, and issues like sexual harassment, it becomes imperative for teachers to continually upgrade their skills and knowledge. This study aims to explore the pivotal role played by the *Guru Belajar Nusantara community in Pekalongan* in the advancement of teacher competence. This research adopts a qualitative approach, employing a case study research type to delve into the subject matter. The findings of this study highlight several key aspects: Advocating for Teacher Independence: The *Guru Belajar Nusantara community in Pekalongan* actively contributes to the cause of teacher independence. By supporting teachers' autonomy in their professional development, they help enhance their pedagogical competence and overall professionalism. Fostering Competence Development: The community ensures that every teacher has equitable opportunities to enhance their competence. This commitment to professional growth is instrumental in improving the pedagogical competence of teachers and elevating their professionalism. Facilitating Collaborative Empowerment: The *Guru Belajar Nusantara community in Pekalongan* actively engages in empowering teachers through diverse collaborations. This collaborative approach plays a significant role in boosting teachers' social competence, enabling them to navigate the complexities of the educational landscape more effectively. In summary, this research underscores the critical role played by the *Guru Belajar Nusantara community in Pekalongan* in championing teacher independence, fostering competence development, and facilitating collaborative empowerment. These endeavors collectively contribute to improving the overall competence and professionalism of teachers in the Pekalongan region.

Keywords: Collaborative empowerment, *Guru Belajar Nusantara* community, pedagogical competence, professional development, teacher competence

How to cite (APA 7th Edition Style):

Sunarko, M. H. & Musytamil, K. (2023). The role of *Guru Belajar Nusantara* community in improving teacher competence. *Tadibia Islamika*, 3(1), 54-61. <https://doi.org/10.28918/tadibia.v3i1.350>

Introduction

Education is a multifaceted program encompassing elements like curriculum, infrastructure, methodologies, students, and teachers, all interlinked to achieve educational objectives. Of these, the teacher element stands out as one of the most crucial. In the realm of education, teachers play a pivotal role in the process of imparting knowledge and fostering personal growth. Education functions as a conduit for transmitting knowledge, values, and the preservation and evolution of cultural wisdom within society, achieved through the development of individual personalities (Annisa Alfath et al., 2022). Its purpose is to equip individuals to navigate and thrive in their cultural and societal surroundings.

Education empowers individuals with the ability to critically comprehend and apply knowledge and understanding in their thinking and actions. The success of an educational system can be measured through various facets, such as the roles of students as learners, teachers as educators, the quality of provided learning materials, teaching methods, and the availability of necessary infrastructure.

The central role of teachers in the educational process is universally acknowledged. However, research reveals that teachers' influence accounts for only about 1-14% of students' academic achievement, a percentage overshadowed by factors such as school structures and conditions (around 7-20%), and even more so by factors within individual students (60-80%), including parental influences, socioeconomic conditions, nutrition, health, culture, and life experiences (Najelaa Shihab, 2017). This indicates an incomplete understanding of the multifaceted role teachers play.

Teachers are central in developing their own competence. According to Hattie, the ideal learning process places the learner in control and responsible for their learning journey, with the teacher assuming the role of a sensitive learner who caters to students' needs (Najelaa Shihab, 2017). Presently, Indonesian education faces numerous challenges, including learning difficulties, bullying, sexual harassment, and an overall education crisis, as children struggle with basic reading and math skills (Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Boyolali District, 2022). These issues underscore the need for enhancing teacher competencies.

Competence, defined by Echols and Shadly, encompasses the knowledge, skills, and behaviors required for a teacher to achieve learning objectives through training, education, and self-directed learning, utilizing available learning resources (Annisa Alfath et al., 2022). Improving teacher competence is essential for various reasons, including advancements in educational science and technology, job satisfaction, job security, and the pivotal role teachers play in implementing school-based quality improvement management.

Enhancing teacher competence involves helping less experienced teachers mature in their profession and transforming non-professional teachers into professionals. This transformation positively affects the quality of teaching and learning in schools. Teacher professional competence goes beyond theoretical knowledge; it involves taking action and innovating. Competent teachers are those who can adapt, innovate, and demonstrate their expertise in practical settings (Annisa Alfath et al., 2022).

Rizqy Rahmat Hani and Nunuk Riza Puji, members of Komunitas Guru Belajar Nusantara Pekalongan, exemplify professional teachers who have made significant contributions to education. Through this community, teachers can enhance their competence and contribute to the improvement of education in Pekalongan. *Guru Belajar Nusantara community in Pekalongan* offers a platform for subject teachers from various levels and institutions to share best practices, promoting the quality of learning (Komunitas Guru Belajar Nusantara, 2021).

Founded in 2014, Komunitas Guru Belajar Nusantara was initiated by Najelaa Shihab and a group of teachers from different regions who shared a passion for enhancing the quality of learning. Over the years, the community has grown substantially, spanning multiple regions (Komunitas Guru Belajar Nusantara, 2022). Komunitas Guru Belajar Nusantara Pekalongan, established in 2016, represents the city and regency of Pekalongan.

The roles of *Guru Belajar Nusantara community in Pekalongan* include advocating for teacher learning independence, ensuring every teacher has opportunities for competence development, empowering teachers through diverse collaborations, supporting career development, and creating adaptive organizational governance (Komunitas Guru Belajar Nusantara, 2021).

To support these roles, *Guru Belajar Nusantara community in Pekalongan* organizes various programs, including Regional Educators Gatherings, Nusantara Educators Gatherings, and the Ramadhan Spirit of Learning. These initiatives aim to foster collaboration and empower teachers, ultimately contributing to the advancement of education in Indonesia (Komunitas Guru Belajar Nusantara, 2021).

Method

The research methodology employed in this article adopts a field research approach with a specific focus on case study research. Field research is characterized by its in-depth exploration of subjects in their natural settings (Untung, 2022). This approach emphasizes the collection of data directly from individuals within their real-life contexts, providing valuable insights into the phenomena under investigation. In this study, the researchers are dedicated to gaining a comprehensive understanding of efforts to enhance teacher competence through the involvement of Komunitas Guru Belajar Nusantara Pekalongan.

The nature of the research, as described, is primarily descriptive and analytic. This means that the study aims to portray and explain the reality of the situation while analyzing the endeavors undertaken to improve teacher competence through the influence of Komunitas Guru Belajar Nusantara Pekalongan. Descriptive analysis focuses on providing a clear and detailed account of the subject matter, shedding light on the intricacies of teacher competence enhancement.

The research adopts a qualitative approach, emphasizing a qualitative data collection and analysis process. A qualitative approach is characterized by its emphasis on the inductive and deductive reasoning processes and analyses (Untung, 2022). This method allows for a nuanced exploration of the research topic, enabling the researchers to derive insights and patterns from the data collected. It encourages a holistic and context-rich understanding of the subject matter.

In this study, the researchers rely on two main categories of data sources: primary and secondary data sources. The primary data sources, considered the primary focus of the investigation, are the teachers who are members of Komunitas Guru Belajar Nusantara Pekalongan. Their firsthand experiences and perspectives are vital for understanding the impact of the community on enhancing teacher competence. Secondary data sources, on the other hand, include books or journals that discuss various aspects of improving teacher competence. These secondary sources provide additional context and theoretical underpinnings for the research.

To gather and process the necessary data and materials for the study, the authors employ a range of data collection techniques. These include: Interviews: The researchers conduct interviews with teachers who are members of Komunitas Guru Belajar Nusantara Pekalongan. These interviews are likely to be semi-structured or open-ended, allowing teachers to express

their experiences, perceptions, and insights regarding the community's role in improving their competence. Observation: Observation is another crucial data collection technique. Researchers may observe the activities and interactions within the Komunitas Guru Belajar Nusantara Pekalongan, gaining firsthand insights into how the community functions and contributes to teacher competence development. Documentation: Researchers rely on existing documents, records, or publications related to the activities and initiatives of Komunitas Guru Belajar Nusantara Pekalongan. These documents can provide historical context and supplementary information.

Regarding data analysis, the process typically follows a systematic approach: Data Condensation: This initial step involves condensing and organizing the collected data. Researchers sift through the data to identify key themes, patterns, and noteworthy information. Data Presentation: Once the data is organized, it is presented in a coherent manner. This can involve the use of tables, charts, or narrative descriptions to make the data more accessible to readers. Drawing Conclusions: The final phase of analysis involves drawing meaningful conclusions from the data. Researchers interpret the findings in the context of the research objectives, addressing questions related to the role of *Guru Belajar Nusantara community in Pekalongan* in enhancing teacher competence.

In summary, the research methodology used in this study employs a field research approach with a focus on case study research. It adopts a descriptive and analytic nature and emphasizes a qualitative approach. Data is collected from primary and secondary sources using techniques such as interviews, observation, and documentation. The subsequent data analysis involves data reduction, presentation, and the formulation of conclusions to address the research objectives effectively.

Results and Discussion

Guru Belajar Nusantara community in Pekalongan has a role in improving teacher competence. The results of the research that the author obtained related to the role of *Guru Belajar Nusantara community in Pekalongan* are as follows:

Fighting for Teacher Learning Freedom

Every teacher has the opportunity to determine learning goals, methods and reflections to continuously develop themselves. Such as being involved in setting school performance targets, teachers choose training that suits their learning needs, conduct periodic reflections on achievements and the process of achieving targets. *Guru Belajar Nusantara community in Pekalongan* is fighting for teacher independence through various activities, all of which are aimed at enabling teachers to learn and share learning practices related to teacher competencies (Huda, Interview, March 29, 2023).

In addition, *Guru Belajar Nusantara community in Pekalongan* is also very inspiring and continues to try to assist prospective teachers and teachers to learn together and take roles according to their respective conditions and needs (Zidnil, Interview, March 28, 2023). Within the Komunitas Guru Belajar Nusantara there is a space for teachers to learn from each other with topics of discussion according to their needs and occasionally filled by teachers who have knowledge or teaching skills that can be used as a learning resource for other teachers. For example, the Regional Educators Gathering activity filled with training activities held at Pekalongan Cahaya Al Quran Science High School is an effort to improve the competence and ability of teachers in the Pekalongan city area to master the PjBl (Project Based Learning) learning method in accordance with the essence of the Merdeka Curriculum (Aditama et al., 2022).

From the explanation above, it can be concluded that the role of *Guru Belajar Nusantara community in Pekalongan* in fighting for independence for teachers is to provide activities for both prospective teachers and teachers for self-development. The routine activity of *Guru Belajar Nusantara community in Pekalongan* is the Regional Educator Gathering. This activity is a training and development program for teachers.

Ensuring every teacher has the opportunity to develop their competencies

Teachers who are members of *Guru Belajar Nusantara community in Pekalongan* have the opportunity to develop their competencies so that they are ready to face teaching challenges according to their field of study, the students they teach, and the relevant context. For example, they have the opportunity to participate in training that is appropriate to their learning needs, the opportunity to get quality feedback and the opportunity to assess their competence.

Every teacher in *Guru Belajar Nusantara community in Pekalongan* is always given space to develop their competencies, such as in the Nusantara Educators' Gathering (Cici, Interview, March 30, 2023). The Nusantara Educators' Gathering activity contains independence classes that discuss the independent curriculum and learning methods in the classroom. This activity is a means of developing competencies targeting teachers, parents, and policy makers. Both as participants can gain new knowledge, as speakers can train to become speakers, for moderators can train to guide the event (Huda, Interview, March 29, 2023).

From the explanation above, it can be concluded that the role of *Guru Belajar Nusantara community in Pekalongan* in ensuring that every teacher has the opportunity to develop competence is to provide opportunities in every activity carried out by the Community, be it as a participant, speaker, or event host. Teachers who become speakers will convey teaching skills or new knowledge packaged in discussion sessions at Nusantara Educators Gathering activities.

Empowering Teachers to Engage in Diverse Collaborations

Every teacher has the opportunity to collaborate with other teachers and communities to produce work or achieve common goals. These include opportunities to interact with other schools, opportunities to engage in relevant communities and opportunities to undertake joint projects. *Guru Belajar Nusantara community in Pekalongan* facilitates every teacher who is a member to engage in collaboration.

The community's teachers are involved in collaboration in the Ramadhan Spirit of Learning activity (Arifin, Interview, March 27, 2023). This routine activity, which is held once a year in the holy month of Ramadan, is a space for teachers who have interests that can be developed. Teachers who are members of the Community are always given information when there are activities and all teachers are invited to take a collaborative role from kindergarten level teachers to high school level teachers (Zidnil, Interview, March 28, 2023).

The role of *Guru Belajar Nusantara community in Pekalongan* in empowering teachers to engage in diverse collaborations is through the Ramadhan Spirit of Learning activity. Routine activities where every teacher from kindergarten to high school level can take on a collaborative role. Such as getting the opportunity to interact with other schools, the opportunity to get involved in relevant communities and the opportunity to do joint projects.

Supporting Teachers to Develop Their Careers

Teachers who are members of *Guru Belajar Nusantara community in Pekalongan* have the opportunity to recognize, choose, plan and develop their careers. This is in accordance with their potential and aspirations while still teaching in the classroom. Such as the opportunity to

work, the opportunity to introduce their work through presentations, exhibitions, on the web or applications and get feedback on their work.

Guru Belajar Nusantara community in Pekalongan has a lot to offer in developing teachers' careers. Starting from the opportunity to take part in every activity held by the Community to collaborative activities (Huda, Interview, March 29, 2023). *Guru Belajar Nusantara community in Pekalongan* is always involved in the creation of the Ministry of Education and Culture's learning modules. This is one way of developing teachers' careers as writers (Arifin, Interview, March 27, 2023).

It can be concluded that the role of *Guru Belajar Nusantara community in Pekalongan* in providing support for teachers to develop their careers is by always providing opportunities for teachers to explore their talents and interests through roles in every activity. For example, module-making activities organized by *Guru Belajar Nusantara community in Pekalongan* can be a way for teachers to develop their careers as writers.

Realizing Organizational Governance that is Adaptive to Change

Guru Belajar Nusantara community in Pekalongan is a professional organization that is always adaptive to change. In this community, all information about actual education is always obtained more quickly. Such as related to the independent curriculum. Therefore, the *Guru Belajar Nusantara community in Pekalongan* itself is often invited to be a resource person in seminars, workshops, IHT (In House Training) to discuss the independent curriculum.

Guru Belajar Nusantara community in Pekalongan has never closed itself off to various other organizations and institutions and developments that occur. This community always opens itself to better changes (Huda, Interview, March 29, 2023). *Guru Belajar Nusantara community in Pekalongan* shows changes in teaching for the better according to the needs and developments of the times (Cici, Interview, March 30, 2023). From this explanation, it can be concluded that in managing its organization, *Guru Belajar Nusantara community in Pekalongan* is always adaptive to change. It does not close itself to other organizations and institutions and is always up-to-date in conveying information related to education.

Teachers have a role as agents of change that is very vital and fundamental in helping and guiding students in the process of change from not knowing to knowing, not understanding to understanding, not mastering to mastering and so on (Aditama et al., 2022). To be able to carry out this role, teachers must always improve their competence. Teachers can participate in various competency improvement activities such as training, seminars, discussions organized by organizations and communities.

Guru Belajar Nusantara community in Pekalongan is an association that has a role in improving teacher competence. There are three roles of *Guru Belajar Nusantara community in Pekalongan* of Teachers. First, the role *Guru Belajar Nusantara community in Pekalongan* is to fight for teacher independence. By providing activities for both prospective teachers and teachers for self-development. The routine activity of *Guru Belajar Nusantara community in Pekalongan* is the Regional Educator Gathering. The activities that are held regularly are training and development for teachers which can increase paedagogic competence and professionalism.

Second, the role of *Guru Belajar Nusantara community in Pekalongan* is to ensure that every teacher has the opportunity to develop competence. Providing opportunities in every activity carried out by the Community, be it as a participant, speaker, or event host. The Nusantara Educators Gathering activity is an activity that facilitates teachers as participants, speakers and guides. Nusantara Educators Gathering activities are filled with independence

classes that discuss the independent curriculum and learning methods in the classroom. From these activities, it can improve the pedagogic competence and professionalism of teachers.

Third, the role of *Guru Belajar Nusantara community in Pekalongan* is to empower teachers in diverse collaborations. Through the Ramadhan Spirit of Learning activity, which is a routine activity where every teacher from kindergarten to high school level can take a collaborative role. Such as getting the opportunity to interact with other schools, the opportunity to get involved in relevant communities and the opportunity to do joint projects. From the involvement of teachers in Ramadhan Spirit of Learning activities, this can improve their social competence.

Conclusion

In conclusion, *Guru Belajar Nusantara community in Pekalongan* plays a pivotal role in enhancing teacher competence through a multifaceted approach. This conclusion is drawn based on the following key roles of the community.

The community actively champions teacher independence, primarily through its Regional Educator Gathering activities. These gatherings serve as platforms for training and development, equipping teachers with the tools and knowledge to enhance their pedagogic competence and professionalism. By participating in these activities, teachers gain valuable insights and skills that empower them to tackle educational challenges with greater autonomy and resilience.

The Nusantara Educators Gathering activities provide teachers with unique opportunities to expand their competence. Within these events, teachers assume roles as resource persons, participants, and guides, engaging in discussions on the independent curriculum and innovative learning methods. This participatory approach enables teachers to refine their pedagogic competence and professionalism, as they actively contribute to the educational discourse and share their expertise.

A core aspect of the Learning Teacher Community's mission is to empower teachers through diverse collaborations. This third role is instrumental in improving teachers' social competence. The community's Ramadhan Spirit of Learning activities facilitate interactions among teachers from various schools, fostering a sense of community and shared purpose. These activities also provide opportunities for teachers to engage with relevant communities and embark on collaborative projects. Through these collaborations, teachers not only enhance their social competence but also gain a broader perspective on education, enriching their professional growth.

In essence, *Guru Belajar Nusantara community in Pekalongan* serves as a catalyst for teacher development, focusing on pedagogic, professional, and social competence. By advocating for teacher independence, creating learning platforms, and promoting collaborative endeavors, the community contributes significantly to the ongoing improvement of teacher competence. This multifaceted approach aligns with the evolving needs of the education landscape and empowers teachers to navigate the challenges and opportunities of their profession effectively.

Conflict of interests

The author declares that they have no conflict of interest.

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