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STUDENTS' PERCEPTION ON *MERDEKA LEARNING MERDEKA CAMPUS*: AN EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE IN INDONESIAN EDUCATION POLICY

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ABSTRACT

The educational issue of the Indonesian people is that literacy skills are still low, and they need answers from Merdeka Learn Campus Merdeka to improve the quality of Human Resources through digital skills and creative thinking. The study aimed to describe the empirical evidence regarding the students' perceptions of the effectiveness of MBKM policy implementation on learning outcomes. Qualitative research was approached in this study. The research object is the policy of independent learning on an independent campus. All students who took part in this program from Esa Unggul University were selected using stratified random sampling. We analyzed the information from the respondents using the content analysis approaches. The results showed that the student's perceptions of the implementation of the MBKM program were effectively based on the expectations of students. The performance of the MBKM program, regardless of policies, mechanisms, and benefits of MBKM implementation more than 70%. The implementation of MBKM among students is beneficial. It was due to improving the competence and skills of students as a provision to work after graduation. The implication of the research is optimizing student involvement as mandatory for the achievement of the Main Performance Indicators of higher education.

KEYWORDS: Independent Learning Independent Campus, Student Perception

INTRODUCTION

Merdeka Learning – Merdeka Campus (MBKM) in the transformation of higher education changes into a major issue in Indonesia. Changes in campus from a place to study in the classroom for students and lecturers face to face, to become independent by learning outside the classroom by establishing collaborative, participatory roles of lecturers and students. The era of industrial revolution 4.0 and society 5.0 requires university graduates to be tough in facing social, cultural, work, and technological changes (Permendikbud No. 3 of 2020). Mastery of diversity of abilities will support the success process of graduate students when they take part in the world of work and industry.

Students' abilities in the industry will depend on the competencies compiled from the MBKM curriculum. Many of these discussions have been put forward from implementing the MBKM

curriculum through improvements to the previous curriculum structure (Suwandi, 2020), problems that arise in curriculum implementation (Siswanto, 2009; Haryanto, 2020; Susetyo, 2020). the importance of implementing the MBKM curriculum (Suryaman, 2020). The curriculum change is through an adaptation process carried out by universities because it is an essential instrument in the quality of education (Richards, 2001; McNeil, 2006). The quality of education delivery depends on the output of the educational process that can make a significant contribution to global society.

The issue of MBKM development is often associated with the development of the era. This era requires university graduates to be strong in facing social, cultural, work, literacy, and technological changes in the industrial revolution 4.0, society 5.0, and public literacy, which the education world must answer through MBKM (Arrozi, 2021; Suryaman, 2020). Mastery of diversity of abilities will support the success process of graduate students when they take part in the world of work and industry. The results of Suryaman's study (2020) show that MBKM could answer the issue of artificial intelligence and the use of cyberspace, which is now increasingly valuable for the COVID-19 pandemic situation. even in the key to education itself regarding public literacy issues that the world of education must answer through MBKM.

An essential key in education is literacy skills. The literacy issue of the Indonesian people is still low. In 2016, Unesco's 2016 World's Most Literate Nations program placed Indonesia in the 60th position out of 61 countries with low literacy skills (Suryaman, 2020). Data from the 2015 Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) puts the reading ability of Indonesian students at 62 out of 72 countries. This shows that the interest of the Indonesian people in reading is only 0.001. This means that only one person is interested in reading out of 1,000 Indonesians interested in reading.

The problem of low literacy makes the MBKM policy a critical solution to improve Indonesia's human resources. The era of Big Data stimulates to enhance the quality of Human Resources with digital skills and creative thinking (Junaid et al., 2020). There is a link and match education with the world of work and industry so that university graduates are ready to work with areas of expertise and the needs of the world of work (Arifin et al., 2020). The Ministry of Education and Culture realized this through a new policy with Merdeka Learning – Merdeka Campus (Widiyono et al., 2021).

ESA Unggul University, as an academic unit, has implemented the Independent Learning-Independent Campus (MBKM) policy for the last year in the odd semester of the 2021/2022 academic year. The Ministry of Education and Culture runs the Independent Learning Program-Free Campus. It has 5 MBKM schemes, including the Independent Student Exchange (PMM) as a recipient and partner university, Student Mobility (IISMA), Independent Projects, certified independent students, Teaching campus and internships; and MBKM Mandiri in the form of Real Work Lectures, and Direct Work Practices (PKL). Through MBKM learning outside the university, students will experience a different learning climate from the learning climate at Esa Unggul University. In addition, the spirit of MBKM

learning is to increase the spirit of national unity and transfer knowledge to cover educational gaps (Kemdikbud, 2020).

The results of scientific studies regarding the Independent Learning-Independent Campus policy have been widely carried out regarding the relationship with study programs such as Nehru (2019), Elihami (2019), Abidah et al. (2020), Asfiati & Mahdi (2020), Fadhil (2020), Fira (2020), Halitopo (2020), Hartoyo (2020), Haryanto (2020), Hastuti (2020), Izza, et al. (2020), Kurniawan (2020), Mu'amalah (2020), Mustaghfiroh (2020), Naufal, et al. (2020), Pendi (2020), Piong (2020), Yulian (2020), Yamin & Syahrir (2020), Wardhana (2020), Sugiri & Priatmoko (2020), Sesfao (2020), Sabardila (2020), Ramadania & Aswadi (2020), and Priatmoko & Dzakiyyah (2020). The above study results conducted a review related to the concept of Independent Learning-Independent Campus with science in study program learning. However, academics in higher education have not evaluated the effectiveness of MBKM implementation in higher education. This article focuses on that direction.

MBKM research's motivation is urgent because MBKM consists of two essential concepts: Merdeka Learning and Merdeka Campus. First, freedom of learning gives meaning to the essence of independence which must be started by educators and is seen as an effort to respect changes in learning in higher education. Second, the independent campus is a continuation of the concept of independent learning to release the shackles to move more efficiently and be innovative in obtaining quality learning.

The purpose of research on the implementation of MBKM policies is to obtain empirical evidence of student perceptions of the effectiveness of MBKM policy implementation. The study results can be used to evaluate the sustainability of MBKM learning.

The contribution of research on the implementation of MBKM is to provide policy recommendations regarding the implementation of MBKM to produce graduates as future leaders of the nation.

RESEARCH METHODS

Research design

This research is in the form of exploratory qualitative with a survey approach. The type of research is descriptive, explaining the information content of the implementation of Merdeka Learning-Independent Campus from the perceptions or opinions of students as actors in MBKM learning. The type of research is evaluation, which examines the performance of MBKM at Esa Unggul University, Jakarta.

The object of research is the implementation of the Independent Learning-Independent Campus policy. MBKM is held at Esa Unggul University as a university that has organized an Independent Learning-Independent Campus for the last year. The Independent Learning Program-Independent Campus is run from the Ministry of Education and Culture's MBKM scheme with 5 MBKM schemes. It has consisted

of Independent Student Exchange (PMM) as a recipient and partner university, Student Mobility (IISMA), Independent Projects, certified independent students, Teaching campus and internships; and MBKM Mandiri in the form of Real Work Lectures and Direct Work Practices (PKL).

The population in this study were Esa Unggul University students who were active in the Odd semester of the 2021-2022 academic year, as many as 15,746 students from 10 faculties and 34 study programs. The sample in this study was 6417 students of Esa Unggul University. The sampling technique is stratified random sampling: students in semesters 5, 6, and 7 in each batch in 34 study programs. The unit of analysis is the individual student.

The data collection method used a field survey. Esa Unggul University students were asked to fill out the questionnaire directly through the SPADA DIKTI page. Measurement of MBKM policy implementation uses an ordinal scale. The aim is to determine the level of preference that students know about MBKM. In the questionnaire, students must answer four questions related to MBKM. Filling out the questionnaire is done directly and simultaneously from 20 to 24 December 2021. The time horizon is the One-Shot Study.

Variable Operational Definition

The research variable is the implementation of the MBKM policy. MBKM policy implementation is the implementation of MBKM from the perspective of policy dimensions, implementation, benefits, knowledge, competency, and skill improvement. The variable indicator was developed from the MBKM Dikti implementation policy consisting of 20 questions. The measurement of indicators uses an ordinal/ranking scale.

RESEARCH MODEL

This research model is shown in Figure 1 below:

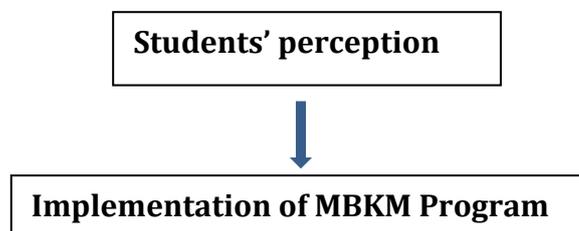


Figure 1. Research Model

Data analysis method

Data analysis uses content analysis and measures effectiveness using the Gutmann scale. Significance is assessed based on a scale that considers approval above the 70% threshold value. Each indicator of

the respondent's answers was carried out by content analysis to explain the information content of the implementation of Merdeka Learning-Independence Campus from the perception of students in implementing student programs.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research result

Respondent Demographics The number of students who filled out the questionnaire was 6417 students spread over 10 faculties within Esa Unggul University, while the full details are described in table 1 below:

Table 1. Student Respondents

No	Faculty	Total
1	Faculty of health sciences	1824
2	Faculty of creative industry design	563
3	Faculty of economic and business	1303
4	Faculty of Law	827
5	Faculty of Engineering	58
6	Faculty of Computer science	76
7	Faculty of communication science	1140
8	Faculty of Physiotherapy	282
9	Faculty of psychology	232
10	Faculty of Education	112
Total		6417

Source: data processed 2021

Based on table 1, it can be seen that the students who dominate the respondents are students from the Faculty of Health Sciences, followed by the Faculty of Economics and Business and the Faculty of Communication Studies. Descriptive Statistics Based on the results of questions that students have filled in, it can be seen in the answers descriptively in table 2. Gutmann analysis is used to obtain how much effect the MBKM implementation has.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics

No	Indicator	Highest Preference
1	How well do you know about the Independent Learning-Independent Campus (MBKM) policy?	Mostly know
2	In your opinion, how many semesters and how many credits can be equated with MBKM activities outside the university?	2 semester/ 20 credits

3	Where did you get information about the Independent Learning-Independent Campus (MBKM) policy?	Offline/Online Socialization Activities organized by UNiversity
4	Does your study program have any previous programs that match the form of the Independent Learning-Independent Campus (MBKM) activity?	Yes
5	If the answer is yes, select the form of MBKM activity that has been previously owned.	Internship/ Job Training
6	If you were asked to choose from 8 (eight) forms of learning activities outside the study program, which would you choose?	Apprenticeship/ Work Practice
7	In your opinion, what is the information media to increase understanding of the Independent Learning-Independent Campus (MBKM) policy? Please choose the best 3 (three) based on their ranking	College online channel (website/website , social media)
8	Do curriculum documents, guidelines and operational procedures for participating in MBKM activities already exist in your study program?	Has(Effectively)
9	Have you prepared yourself to be a part of MBKM activities?	Has(Effectively)
10	In your opinion, what do students need to prepare for the optimal implementation of MBKM?	Study the MBKM guide and curriculum that facilitates MBKM
11	In your opinion, what are your concerns when carrying out learning activities outside of campus?	Spend
12	In your opinion, will learning activities outside the study program have implications during the study period?	Stay on time
13	In your opinion, will off-campus learning activities provide additional competencies such as skills in solving complex real problems, analytical skills, professional ethics, etc.?	Yes effectively
14	In your opinion, studying in another study program will broaden your perspective and provide the additional competencies needed?	Yes effectively

15	In your opinion, how useful are you if you take part in MBKM activities in developing competence/skills as a preparation for work after graduation?	Quite Useful (effectively)
16	In your opinion, how much of an increase in soft-skills did you get after you took part in MBKM activities in developing competence/skills to prepare you for work after graduation?	Good upgrade / (effectively)
17	In your opinion, how important are MBKM activities to prepare for the post-campus period?	Important / (Effective)
18	In your opinion, do MBKM activities for higher education meet the needs of future graduates?	Appropriate / (Effective)
19	How are you interested in the MBKM program held by the Directorate General of Higher Education, Research, and Technology?	Very Interested (Effective)
20	After knowing in detail about the MBKM program, would you recommend this program to your colleagues?	Very Interested (Effective)

Source: data processed 2021

DISCUSSION

The Merdeka Learning Campus Independent Program (MBKM), which is a policy initiated by the Ministry of Education and Culture, has several advantages and concerns over implementing these activities in the future. This is reflected in the results of the descriptive answers in table 2, which contain information on the MBKM indicators by applying content analysis from the descriptive data. The results of the content analysis show the following studies:

a. MBKM Policy

The implementation of MBKM in higher education will change the curriculum of the study program. This must be balanced with the spirit of curriculum change that not only arises from universities and study programs but must also depart from students as users of the MBKM curriculum. Therefore, it is crucial to see students' readiness with the implementation of this MBKM. A brief description of student perceptions based on their preferred preferences for the performance of MBKM is shown in table 3.

Table 3. MBKM Policy

No	Indicator	Conclusion
1	How well do you know about the Independent Learning-Independent Campus (MBKM) policy?	Mostly know
2	In your opinion, how many semesters and how many credits can be equated with MBKM activities outside the university?	2 semester / 20 credits
3	Where did you get information about the Independent Learning-Independent Campus (MBKM) policy?	Offline/Online Socialization Activities organized by university
4	Does your study program have any previous programs that match the form of the Independent Learning-Independent Campus (MBKM) activity?	Yes

Source: data processed 2021

Regarding the MBKM policy carried out by the Ministry of Education and Culture, seen from student perceptions, it was explained that most students knew most of the contents of the MBKM policy obtained from offline/online socialization activities organized by universities in this case, Esa Unggul University. Most students understand that the implementation of MBKM is carried out in 2 semesters with an equal weight of 20 credits. Therefore, MBKM is a student's right to obtain course recognition (Structure Form) or CPL (Free Form) (Suryaman, 2020).

MBKM implementation activities at Esa Unggul University are based on Quality Standards, the Rector's Regulations. The Standard Operational Guidelines are eight MBKM schemes implemented where standards and operations are prepared by the Research and Community Service Institute and the Quality Assurance Office.

b. MBKM Implementation Mechanism

The MBKM implementation mechanism in higher education will be implemented every semester to distribute the study program curriculum. This mechanism reflected the implementation of MBKM, both independent and independent from the Ministry of Education, Research, and Technology. Therefore, it is imperative to see students' performance of MBKM activities. A brief description of student perceptions based on their preferred preferences for the MBKM implementation mechanism is shown in table 4.

Table 4. Mechanism of MBKM Implementation

No	Indicator	Conclusion
1	If the answer is yes, choose the form of MBKM activity that has been previously owned.	Internship/ Job Training
2	If you were asked to choose from 8 (eight) forms of learning activities outside the study program, which would you choose?	Apprenticeship/ Work Practice
3	In your opinion, what is the information media to increase understanding of the Independent Learning-Independent Campus (MBKM) policy? Please choose the best 3 (three) based on their ranking	College online channel (website/website, social media)
4	Do curriculum documents, guidelines and operational procedures for participating in MBKM activities already exist in your study program?	Already (Effective)
5	Have you prepared yourself to be a part of MBKM activities?	Already (Effective)
6	In your opinion, what do students need to prepare for the optimal implementation of MBKM?	Study the MBKM guide and curriculum that facilitates MBKM
7	In your opinion, what are your concerns when carrying out learning activities outside of campus?	Spend

Source: data processed 2021

Implementation of the Independent Learning Campus Merdeka (MBKM) at Esa Unggul University based on the perception of most students stating that it has been running effectively. This cannot be separated because the activities launched by the Ministry of Education and Culture related to MBKM have been carried out independently by Esa Unggul University, including the Internship/Work Practices scheme, Student Exchange, Research/Research involving students, and Campus teaching. The thing that distinguishes independent MBKM from the Ministry of Education and Culture's MBKM is recognizing the weight of the credits for these activities where the average credit score is around 2-6 credits. The transition from the independent MBKM to the Kemendikbud MBKM is described by adjusting the curriculum, guidelines, and operational procedures.

The implementation of MBKM at Esa Unggul University in terms of student perception states that students have prepared themselves to be part of the activities offered so that most students study MBKM guidelines and the curriculum that facilitates MBKM. The implementation of MBKM in Esa Unggul University is carried out by freeing students to choose the MBKM scheme offered. However, the concern of most students is that the implementation of MBKM will raise costs in the future.

c. MBKM Benefits

The MBKM implementation mechanism in higher education will be implemented every semester to distribute the study program curriculum. This mechanism is reflected in the implementation of MBKM, both independent and independent from the Ministry of Education, Research, and Technology. Therefore, it is essential to see students' performance in MBKM activities. A brief description of student perceptions based on their preferred preferences for the MBKM implementation mechanism is shown in table 5.

Table 5. Benefits of MBKM

No	Indicator	Conclusion
1	In your opinion, will learning activities outside the study program have implications during the study period?	Stay on time
2	In your opinion, will off-campus learning activities provide additional competencies such as skills in solving complex real problems, analytical skills, professional ethics, etc.?	Yes (Effectively)
3	In your opinion, studying in another study program will broaden your perspective and provide the additional competencies needed?	Yes (Effectively)
4	In your opinion, how useful are you if you take part in MBKM activities in developing competence/skills as a preparation for work after graduation?	Quite Useful (Effective)
5	In your opinion, how much of an increase in soft-skills did you get after you took part in MBKM activities in developing competence/skills to prepare you for work after graduation?	Improved well / (Effective)
6	In your opinion, how important are MBKM activities to prepare for the post-campus period?	Important / (Effective)
7	In your opinion, do MBKM activities for higher education meet the needs of future graduates?	Appropriate / (Effective)
8	How are you interested in the MBKM program held by the Directorate General of Higher Education, Research, and Technology?	Very Interested (Effective)
9	After knowing in detail about the MBKM program, would you recommend this program to your colleagues?	Very Interested (Effective)

Source: data processed 2021

Most students believe that the application of MBKM will not interfere with the study period, so it is hoped that the application of MBKM can increase additional competencies such as skills in solving real complex problems, skills in analyzing, professional ethics, and so on. Most students believe that participating in MBKM activities is quite beneficial in developing competence/skills to work after graduation. The improvement of soft skills is well felt by most students after participating in MBKM activities.

The perception of most students is very interested in being able to understand in detail the implementation of MBKM at Esa Unggul University and wish to recommend this MBKM program to colleagues/relatives.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

The results of the study on the implementation of MBKM show that in terms of policies, mechanisms, student roles, benefits, and recommendations for implementing MBKM, it leads that the performance of MBKM is carried out effectively, this is based on the fact that most students agree on the implementation of MBKM above 70%. This shows that the performance of MBKM from both the Independent scheme and the Ministry of Education and Culture scheme has been running smoothly following the policies made by the Minister of Education and Culture regarding MBKM.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The implementation of MBKM at Esa Unggul University has been running effectively according to the wishes of students who perceive policies, mechanisms, student roles, benefits, and recommendations for MBKM implementation to reach above 70%. The concern about the implementation of the MBKM from the perception of most students is that there will be additional costs if the MBKM is implemented.

The recommendation for the implementation of MBKM is that the role of students should be expanded regarding student involvement in the implementation of MBKM to achieve student participation KPIs for the implementation of MBKM within Esa Unggul University.

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