

# The Urgency of Implementation and Challenges of Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka: An Analysis Study at State Higher Education in Kalimantan

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Received: 16/04/2023

Revised: 19/08/2023

Accepted: 23/09/2023

## Abstract

This study aims to describe and analyze the urgency of the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka program along with its implementation and challenges of higher education in Kalimantan, which has launched the Merdeka Learn-Independence Campus. It also identifies and evaluates the indicators for identifying Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka, including student exchanges, internships/work practices, project assistance, economic activities, independent studies/projects, thematic KKN, and teaching assistance in education units. The research method used is descriptive analysis. Data was collected using literature and field studies. Interviews and observations were used in field studies. University-based data sources in Kalimantan include Tanjungpura University, Palangka Raya University, Lambung Mangkurat University, Mulawarman University, Borneo Tarakan University, and the Kalimantan Institute of Technology. The research findings show that the five tertiary institutions in Kalimantan have implemented the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka program by carrying out student exchange programs, apprenticeships/work practices, project assistance, economic activities, independent studies/projects, thematic KKN, and teaching assistance in higher education units. , while the implementation process is carried out highly sustainably by its singularity. The five tertiary institutions already have the capacity by the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka standards stipulated by laws and regulations.

## Keywords

Urgency; Implementation; Challenges; Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The social structure rapidly changed during the Industrial Revolution 4.0 and Society 5.0. Moreover, social collaboration is affected by innovation. Certain work classes are disposed of, and residents have equivalent open and open doors and are profoundly serious. For instructive organizations, the modern upset 4.0 presents difficulties and opens doors. To produce a globally competitive education system with the skills to collaborate, communicate, and think critically and creatively. Education is one of the factors contributing to the development of intelligent human resources by increasing, expanding, and ensuring equal access to quality education services in harmony with technological advances.

Improving the quality of education in Indonesia in facing this dynamic situation requires learning transformation and education reform. The Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia established a new policy, Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka. The concept of learning, originally based on educators, was changed by the Merdeka Belajar to become a learning system specifically designed for students (Kemendikbud, 2020a). The Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka policy aims to train competent human resources to reduce the number of reactions in Indonesia. In particular, universities considered the foundation for innovation implement the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka program at the tertiary level. Universities have started to study and implement the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka program. The following are the main points of the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka policy (Tohir, 2020): opening of a new study program; 2) a higher education accreditation system; 3) universities that have their legal entities; and 4) the right to study for three semesters outside the study program. One of the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka policies is the three-year right-to-study program outside this study program. Higher education regulations mandate this to prepare graduates who can adapt to the world of work and improve the quality of learning. By Article 15 Paragraph 1 Permendikbud No. 3 of 2020, the Three Semester Learning Rights program allows learning activities outside the Study Program as follows: student exchanges, internships/work practices, project assistance, economic activities, independent studies/projects, thematic KKN, and teaching assistance in educational units. By adjusting the policy model for the development of Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka, study programs must strive to develop education management to apply flexible learning opportunities according to student needs and avoid monotony. The Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka program, which is being developed and implemented, is expected to provide solutions to the problems of the quality of education in Indonesia.

The creation of Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka at universities in Kalimantan was made possible by identifying a lecture model by Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka. The purpose of this research is to describe and analyze the development of the implementation of Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka at state universities in Kalimantan. These universities include Tanjungpura University, Palangka Raya University, Lambung Mangkurat University, Mulawarman University, Borneo Tarakan University, and the Kalimantan Institute of Technology. In addition, it also aims to identify and analyze indicators for the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka proclaimed by state universities in Kalimantan. Finally, it aims to find out how student exchange programs, internships/work practices, project assistance, economic activities, independent studies/projects, thematic KKN, and teaching assistance in higher education units are promoted by universities in Kalimantan.

## 2. METHOD

This study uses qualitative methods to give deeper meaning to existing data or facts. This method was chosen because the research does not intend to test hypotheses but instead describes data, facts, current conditions or trends, analyzes, and makes predictions about the implementation of higher education institutions that proclaim Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka in Kalimantan. This study uses a descriptive method to describe and interpret objects according to their characteristics. Based on this

description, it is hoped that the implementation of higher education institutions that have launched Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka in Kalimantan can be found, which can help other tertiary institutions to become Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka.

This research was conducted at five universities, including Tanjungpura University, Palangka Raya University, Lambung Mangkurat University, Mulawarman University, Borneo Tarakan University, and the Kalimantan Institute of Technology. This study focuses on the development model for managing Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka higher education. All data needed for this research was collected from various data sources, including individuals, documents, actions, and institutions. Purposive sampling is used to select and determine data sources. Sampling methods and procedures are selected based on the premise that in qualitative research, the researcher chooses which events and whom to focus on at certain times and circumstances so that sampling is continuously carried out throughout the study. The instrument for collecting data is the researcher himself, functioning as a key instrument or important main research tool according to in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation. Expanding participation, persistence of observation, and data triangulation techniques were used for validation checks. Researchers go through the data collection stages, which begin the data analysis process. The following steps are taken to collect data: 1) Verify all data collected in the field. 2) grouping or organizing data in a way that facilitates data checking. 3) Make it easier for researchers to identify existing data by providing data codes or coding. The steps taken to analyze the data are as follows: data display, reduction, inference, and verification.

### 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

#### *Conceptualization of Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka on Higher Education*

Examining the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) concept, the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) program launched by the Ministry of Education and Culture aims to encourage students to master various knowledge that will help them succeed in the world of work (Prahani et al., 2020). Concerning science and technology have a significant impact on life in various ways, the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka program is appropriate and in line with globalization and modernization. Higher education as an educational institution is freed from bureaucracy and given freedom and autonomy in the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) concept. In tertiary institutions, lecturers as educators are freed from various bureaucratic ties, and students can choose their field of study. The Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) Program is a learning activity that can be carried out in tertiary institutions and is independent and adaptive to form an innovative and creative learning culture. As a result, it is hoped that every tertiary institution, public or private, will adhere to the Independent Learning-Independent Campus Guidebook, which was published by the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Minister of Education and Culture, to provide and facilitate the Free Learning-Independent Campus (MBKM) program. Culture Number 3 of 2020 Article 15 paragraph 1 Permendikbud Number 3 of 2020 stipulates that eight Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) activities can be carried out inside and outside the Study Program. The following figure illustrates the eight activities (Siti Hajar Rohaenah et al., 2022).

The Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka Program (MBKM) has eight activities.: The first activity is a student exchange, which aims to strengthen cross-cultural and ethnic brotherhood and broaden students' insights about diversity. This activity also aims to foster brotherhood and knowledge transfer at the tertiary level. Both internships and apprenticeships. Students are not ready for work because they don't have much work experience in the real world. Therefore, an apprenticeship program is needed to develop work readiness off campus. Programs with less than six months are considered less effective because students lack time to gain experience and develop their potential. Companies that accept internships also assess that because the internship only lasts one semester, it will disrupt business operations (Rodiyah, 2021).

Third, the Humanitarian Project is a program that aims to instill human values in every student. This

program solves the problem that most people's humanity is being eroded in this sophisticated era when humans are increasingly individualistic. Therefore, the humanitarian project aims to develop social sensitivity in students so they are motivated and aware of how to deal with social problems. Fourth, a program known as entrepreneurial activity aims to encourage students' interest and willingness to do business by providing them with the education and guidance they need to start their businesses early (Rodiyah, 2021). This program can be used as a complement to help students who want to create work that can be debated nationally and internationally. Topics or classes not included in the class schedule are included in this program. Sixth, teaching assistance in education units is a program that works with students, school partners, universities, and lecturers as field supervisors to provide opportunities for students interested in studying. Seventh, Research program: this program encourages lecturers and students to research more quickly and produce more useful results. In addition, to build an educative atmosphere with research resources that continue to increase by regenerating researchers early and improving the quality of research by lecturers and students (Samad et al., 2021), building Villages/Thematic Field Work Courses Thematic Field Work Courses (KKNT) are a type of education where students live in communities off campus and participate in learning experiences. Students are expected to be able to develop village or regional potential and provide solutions to existing problems in the village (Baharuddin, 2021). Program activities show that the Merdeka Campus policy is part of the Merdeka Belajar policy by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia. This policy provides opportunities for students to hone their skills by going directly into the real world and preparing them for future careers.

#### ***Implementation of Student Exchange in the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka Program***

Student exchange programs involve enrolling in classes or semesters at domestic and foreign universities through agreements or collaborations made by the government (Arjanto et al., 2022). Sun Education Group student exchange (2020) program allows students from one tertiary institution to study at another. According to the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture (Permendikbud) Number 3 of 2020, student exchanges are held to shape several student attitudes, including respecting cultural diversity, views, religions, and beliefs, as well as cultural authenticity. Opinions or findings of other people, cooperation, sensitivity to social issues, and concern for the environment and society (Kemendikbud, 2020b). There are three categories of student exchanges at Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (Ningrum et al., 2021): 1) students changing study programs at the same campus, 2) students moving between study programs on different campuses, and 3) students moving between study programs on different campuses.

Students support university, faculty, and study program activities involving student exchanges. Starting from the odd semester of 2021, Tanjungpura University, Palangka Raya University, Lambung Mangkurat University, Mulawarman University, Borneo Tarakan University, and the Kalimantan Institute of Technology have carried out student exchanges, both in different study programs at other universities and in the same study program on campus others, especially those who have collaborated, such as Yogyakarta State University, Jakarta State University, Semarang State University, Brawijaya University Malang, Gajah Mada University Yogyakarta. Student learning styles enhance the educational experience and scientific context they receive at other tertiary institutions with characteristics or learning support vehicles designed to improve learning outcomes. This online lesson exchange learning consists of two courses worth two and three credits each. Student exchange is not limited to domestic universities; conversely, as part of the requirements for obtaining a degree, students may also spend one or two semesters at foreign tertiary institutions.

#### ***Implementation of Internship and Work Practice Programs***

Work practices and apprenticeships are one way to improve the quality of university graduates (Sembiring, 2020). According to Bashith (2017), work practices and apprenticeship activities organize education and training that systematically integrates learning on campus with the real world of work (Fahmi et al., 2022). Both students and campuses benefit from internships and work experience. According

to Smith (Irianto, 2000), work experience or the apprenticeship process produces a profile of abilities and competencies related to skills, increasing opportunities for career development after graduation and entry into industry or business. According to Lee & Chao (2013), internships and work practices in the industry positively impact the socialization process in the business or industry, which significantly impacts future career interests. According to Effrisanti (2015), internships and work practices provide opportunities for students to integrate their thoughts and actions and to apply the theories they learn to the world of work. Students participating in work practices or apprenticeships must study industry or business management (Samidjo, 2017). Student perceptions of the implementation of work practices and internships from Tanjungpura University, Palangka Raya University, Lambung Mangkurat University, Mulawarman University, Borneo Tarakan University, and the Kalimantan Institute of Technology confirmed that students agreed with the activity. Students can also acquire personality competencies through soft skills, which can be internalized within students supported by supporting courses. Consequently, supervisory procedures from universities, trainees, staff, and business/industry leaders. Students agree to internships and internships when the job description is clear. Work practices and apprenticeships are carried out by partner institutions, including 29 hotels, 49 regional offices or work units in Kalimantan, 35 state-owned banks, 14 private banks, 30 state-owned enterprises, and 14 regional-owned enterprises.

#### ***Implementation of the Teaching Assistance Program in Education Units***

The teaching assistance program is carried out in schools with guidance from lecturers and tutors, and all learning experiences from tertiary institutions, especially educational institutions for teaching staff (LPTK), are applied in an integrated manner (Uswatiyah et al., 2021). According to research findings by Zuray (2020), there is a significant correlation between the performance of teaching aids in educational units and student subject scores, especially those related to the teaching and learning process. This aligns with the findings of an evaluation conducted by Bashith (2017) and focuses on implementing educational work practices and apprenticeships. The evaluation results found that the lecturer carried out administrative management well, played a role as a learning guide, directed implementation, and assisted in the process of work practices or apprenticeships. The response from the school/madrasah, school residents, and student residences shows that practicum students have developed soft skills, particularly good communication skills. Graduate learning outcomes (CPL) and these activities go hand in hand. College teaching assistance activities in Kalimantan in education units empower students to support the learning process at the elementary, junior high, and high school/vocational school levels in the cities and regions of Kalimantan.

#### ***Implementation of Research Activities***

Research-based learning is a learning strategy based on the characteristics of lectures in tertiary institutions (Trisna Amelia, 2020). Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka higher education in Kalimantan in the form of research activities for students who are passionate about becoming researchers. Students can develop a critical thinking style that will enhance their ability to understand and conduct research and critical thinking skills. The lecture model known as "research-based learning" allows students to participate in a research project while the lecturer is a facilitator. Rangkuti (2017) found that using research-based learning in tertiary institutions can help students write better scientific papers, such as being able to make research designs, sort and describe collected research data, analyze research data to answer problem formulations and then interpret them, being able to conduct observations to find the necessary information and methodology conclude and communicate research results, both in the form of dissemination in scientific forums and the form of scientific publications in the form of journals or proceedings.

This is to the findings of a 2016 study by Slameto, Wardani, and Kristin (2016) about implementing research-based learning and its potential to improve students' research abilities. Sutirman (2013) explains that students can gain direct experience through research-based learning strategies. Students are allowed to seek information, propose hypotheses, collect data, view data, and draw conclusions based on data collected in research-based learning. The learning-by-doing method is used in this activity (Trisna Amelia,

2020). Students support research and activities carried out by the university and faculty. Higher education study centers in Kalimantan have become the focus of research and scientific development student activities at Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM).

### ***Implementation of Entrepreneurial Activities***

An entrepreneur can start his own business, take on most of the risks, and reap the rewards of his efforts. Students can participate in entrepreneurial activities through the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) program. Students agree with this entrepreneurial activity based on survey results. According to the research findings of Pongsibanne and Awaru (2019), many students are interested in participating in entrepreneurial ventures. Ability to earn money, gain experience, develop relationships, and express creativity. According to Mopangga (2014) from Palangkaraya University, individual character, family environment, and academic environment all play a role in their interest in entrepreneurship. It is only natural that students' interest in entrepreneurship will increase if the academic environment encourages entrepreneurial activity.

### ***Implementation of Independent Study Activities and Projects***

Independent study activities and projects require students to create original works of art that can be debated nationally and internationally (Mudrikah et al., 2022). Most students supported the implementation of this activity to realize the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) program. This activity allows students to express their creative ideas and propose solutions to social problems. In addition, this activity has the potential to act as a liaison between community needs and advances in science and technology.

Student Perceptions of Thematic KKN Implementation and Village Development Activities Thematic KKN and village development activities are a type of education in which students work in the community to seek opportunities and solve problems. Students are expected to be able to plan development programs, analyze potentials and challenges, and evaluate programs from these activities. The students supported this activity. Students may be able to interact socially due to this activity. Students can also practice their knowledge by working with other parties, such as the village government or other institutions. Implications Based on students' perceptions of how Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) is implemented in universities in Kalimantan, the main performance indicators (IKU) of tertiary institutions in Kalimantan will have an impact, including: 1) Students gain work experience off campus to equip them with skills and knowledge after graduation; 2) Students take part in off-campus activities to go directly into the field and get hands-on experience or practice. This allows students to acquire knowledge and hands-on practice, thereby increasing their competence as educators (teachers) and enabling them to transfer practical experience to students at school. 3) The various Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) programs that universities in Kalimantan have implemented are going well because students have a positive perception of the implementation of the program so that learning activities outside the campus can be carried out by the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) policy) stipulated by the Ministry of Education and Culture.

### ***Challenges of Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka Implementation***

Universities must quickly adapt to potential obstacles, such as preparing the academic community, lecturers, educational staff, and students to implement the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka policy. According to Susetyo (2020), there are several problems in implementing the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka policy. These issues incorporate instructive objectives. There are still strategies that give a few principles or rules to carrying out the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka, mentality, educational plan improvement in Study programs, coordinated effort with different colleges, cooperation with industry or organizations, taking courses concentrating on other Review Projects at the Advanced education itself or higher Colleges, executing rehearses in establishments, industry or executing The Opportunity to Learning strategy at the Merdeka Grounds is impacted by the preparation of HR and supporting offices (Yanuarsari

et al., 2021).

The policy is successfully implemented. For this reason, three factors of strategic readiness must be considered: human, organizational, and environmental organization. Human readiness is related to the ability of a leader to implement policies and mobilize people inside and outside the organization, as well as whether the organization's human resources have the knowledge, skills, and motivation to implement these policies. According to Pitsitasari and Nugroho (2000), environmental readiness is related to community readiness for policy implementation and readiness to become partners in supporting this implementation.

Lecturers at the Kampus Merdeka play an important role in implementing the Merdeka Belajar policy by acting as facilitators and motivators. Policies that free students from academic responsibilities still require lecturer assistance so that students participating in the program can be well-directed. In addition, the role of lecturers as partners in implementing the Merdeka Belajar program at the Merdeka Campus is to encourage student self-development and facilitate their participation in learning activities. Therefore, for the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka program to run effectively and sustainably, support and commitment from the university are needed to increase the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation of the university's internal lecturers. This university has promised support and commitment that includes physical and non-physical facilities that support academic activities, ensuring that the Merdeka Learning–Independence Campus system is well integrated, implementing memorandums of understanding and cooperation notes with partners, strengthening important networks with alumni, and readiness in preparing the budget for program implementation. As the driving force for this program, lecturers are also very important, so continuous socialization is needed so that lecturers, education staff, and students are more involved in and committed to the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka program.

#### ***The Urgency of Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka***

The Ministry of National Education's policy on independent learning has developed into a series of business strategies that the government can use to overcome the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on students (Abidah et al., 2020). The independent learning policy provides a culture of independent learning by utilizing information technology for life's needs (Arifin & Muslim, 2020). In addition, independent policies can foster strong agentic potential in students through deliberate, thought-based, realization-based, and reflective learning (Alfaiz et al., 2019). As mentioned in the previous paragraph, the implementation of education in schools eventually gave birth to an online-based learning pattern, or online mode (in a network).

The main objective of Merdeka Belajar is to explore the greatest potential of students to innovate independently and improve the quality of lectures. Independent from the education bureaucracy and truly innovative from the education system (Prayogo, 2020). Student involvement in learning will increase as a result of Merdeka Belajar. To achieve world-class education based on collaboration, communication, critical thinking, and creative skills (Sherly et al., 2021). Merdeka Belajar education supports the realization of intelligence in various ways, including improving and equalizing the quality of education, expanding access, and increasing relevance in the application of technology.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded, firstly, the implementation of the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka curriculum is outlined in one of the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka programs, namely the Right to Study Three Semesters Outside the Study Program, with eight activities: student exchanges, internships, teaching assistance in education units, research, humanitarian projects, entrepreneurial activities, independent studies/projects, and thematic real-work lectures. Second, there are challenges and obstacles in implementing Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka, including 1) procedures for cooperation between study programs and partners outside universities, 2) changes in

PTN with legal entities to compete on an international scale, 3) internship procedures carried out with outside institutions universities, 4) lack of HR understanding of the policies for implementing the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka program, 5) inadequate facilities or technology in several tertiary institutions, 6) unpreparedness of human resources in implementing Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka. The third is with the existence of a Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka policy where all learning activities are centered on students and focused on developing student skills and in line with the concept of society 5.0 where all activities are centered on humans where every problem occurs combined with the use of technology. It is hoped that the existence of technology will affect the completeness of problems in social life and be able to answer all challenges in the future society 5.0.

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