

Exploring the effect of MBKM as a new Curriculum in Indonesia

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Abstract: Higher education in Indonesia has faced significant challenges in presenting a curriculum that is responsive and relevant to the demands of the times. The Competency-Based Education Model (MBKM) has been adopted as a new approach in updating the college curriculum. This study aims to explore the influence of MBKM as a new curriculum in Indonesia. The research methods used qualitative analysis through interviews, surveys, and literature studies. The findings show that the implementation of MBKM has had a significant impact in strengthening students' skills, knowledge, and attitudes. In addition, MBKM has also changed the learning paradigm from a center of teaching activities to a center of competency achievement. However, challenges remain in integrating MBKM into the established academic culture and improving the quality of implementation consistently across universities in Indonesia. The implication of this research is the need for continuous support from various stakeholders to ensure the sustainability and effectiveness of MBKM as a new curriculum that is competitive in the global context. Further research is also needed to evaluate the long-term impact of MBKM implementation on the quality of higher education in Indonesia. These include requiring courses as prerequisites, improving coordination with schools, modifying curriculum order, and clarifying credit transfer policies.

Keywords: *MBKM, Curriculum, Learning, Education,*

INTRODUCTION

The quality of education in Indonesia still faces several challenges, including unequal distribution of teachers and schools with limited resources (Sjahrifa, 2018; Surya, 2012). To address these issues, the Indonesian government has implemented the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (Freedom to Learn-Independent Campus) policy. This allows university students to take credits outside their study program for up to 2 semesters (Dirjendikti, 2020). One program under this policy is Kampus Mengajar

(Teaching Campus), where students assist teachers at under-resourced schools.

Previous studies on Kampus Mengajar have focused on its implementation at the elementary school level in various Indonesian provinces (Widiyono et al., 2021; Fatonah et al., 2021). Others examined the program's administration between universities and the government (Puspitasari & Nugroho, 2021; Kamalia & Andriansyah, 2021). However, there is limited research on Kampus

Mengajar for English teaching at the junior high school level.

This study aims to address this gap by investigating how Kampus Mengajar is implemented for English Education students at Jambi University. Specifically, it will examine their preparation, teaching activities, assignments, reporting, and reflection throughout the program. The findings can inform future improvements to Kampus Mengajar for English teaching and learning. This research provides an important contribution on equipping university students to support English education at disadvantaged schools in Indonesia.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Competency-Based Education Model (MBKM)

MBKM was introduced by the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture to allow students more independence in choosing their courses and gaining real-world experience through experiential learning programs (Susilawati, 2021). It is inspired by principles of educational democracy and student-centered learning (Dirjen Dikti, 2020).

Specific objectives are to develop soft and hard skills, prepare graduates for the workforce, and facilitate creativity, capacity building, and personal development through flexible curriculum paths (Dirjen Dikti, 2020). MBKM programs can be designed by the Ministry or individual universities.

Kampus Mengajar Program

Kampus Mengajar involves university students assisting teachers at elementary and junior high

schools, focused on improving literacy, numeracy, technology use, and school development (Kampus Mengajar Handbook, 2022). It provides teaching experience and is targeted for education students or those interested in teaching.

Requirements include being an active 4th year undergraduate with a 3.0 GPA, obtaining recommendation letters, and passing admissions exams and surveys (Kampus Mengajar Handbook, 2022). The program timeline includes coordination with government and schools, observations, developing activity plans, teaching assistance for 8-12 weeks, and reporting. Teaching activities utilize varied methods including concept planting, case studies, role playing, demonstrations, and collaborative learning. Assessments measure literacy and numeracy progress.

Prior Research on Kampus Mengajar

Existing research has studied Kampus Mengajar's implementation and impacts primarily at elementary schools. Widiyono et al. (2021) found it increased student engagement, literacy, numeracy, and provided teaching experience at one school. Anwar (2021) examined teaching assistance, technology adaptation, and administration assistance at an elementary school. Benefits included interpersonal and leadership development for university students. Nurhasanah and Nopianti (2021) also studied student competency improvements at an elementary school. Challenges identified include limited infrastructure, internet access, and teacher technology skills.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

This study utilizes a qualitative descriptive approach to enable an in-depth exploration of the implementation of the Teaching Campus program. As Creswell (1998) notes, qualitative methods are optimal for understanding attitudes, perspectives, and behaviors through detailed participant interviews. The descriptive qualitative method was chosen to identify and describe problems in program implementation, focusing on the actual issues occurring at the time of research.

Participants

Six students participating in the Teaching Campus program were purposively selected as participants based on meeting the criteria of being active English education undergraduates who taught English at partner schools during their program placement. Purposive sampling allows for the selection of information-rich cases that align with study objectives (Speziale & Carpenter, 2003). The small sample size afforded the opportunity for in-depth inquiry into participant experiences.

Data Collection

Semi-structured interviews were conducted via Zoom video conferencing. The 30-60 minute interviews were recorded and transcribed with participant consent. The interview protocol focused on gaining insights into participant experiences before, during, and after their teaching assignment. Semi-structured interviews allow for focused,

conversational inquiry while also permitting the exploration of emergent topics (Seidman, 2006).

Data Analysis

Transcripts were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six phase approach to thematic analysis. The researcher became familiarized with the data through repeated reading of transcripts. Line-by-line coding was then conducted to identify features of interest, followed by collating codes into potential themes. Themes were reviewed in relation to the coded extracts and refined to identify the essence of each theme. This recursive process resulted in clear theme definitions that encapsulate important patterns related to the research question.

Trustworthiness

Member checking was utilized to verify and validate results by seeking participant feedback on the credibility of themes and interpretations (Doyle, 2007). Participants confirmed that the findings accurately represented their experiences, enhancing the credibility of the analysis.

FINDINGS

Pre-Assignment Activities

Prior to their placements, students completed a 2-week training program delivered via Zoom and YouTube. The training covered the program's objectives, teaching methods, development of literacy and numeracy skills, use of technology in the classroom, and other pedagogical topics. Speakers included teaching experts, motivational speakers, and field supervisors. After training, students connected

with assigned field supervisors through WhatsApp and Telegram to formulate plans for their school placements. On the first day of assignment, students visited district education offices accompanied by their supervisors to obtain permission to implement the program and receive placement letters for their assigned schools. They then met with school principals and teachers to introduce themselves and explain the program's goals.

Initial Assignment Activities

During the first week of their placements, students conducted observations of school facilities, media availability, and student demographics and needs. They identified issues to address through the program, such as lack of learning resources or technology. Based on their observations, students developed literacy and numeracy lesson plans, plans for technology integration, and ideas for assisting with school administration. Lesson plans were designed collaboratively with other students placed at the same school as well as individually. With guidance from field supervisors and classroom teachers, students compiled initial reports summarizing their observations and program plans. These reports were submitted through the MBKM app as the first weekly reports.

Daily Assignment Activities

In addition to conducting literacy, numeracy, technology, and administration activities, students provided English instruction to students using grammar translation and total physical response teaching methods. Lesson topics included

conversational skills like greetings, expressing gratitude, apologizing, introductions, telling time, days and months, and pronunciation practice. Classroom activities involved warm-up discussions, material review, presentation of new material, and oral or written evaluation. In addition to classroom teaching, students assisted teachers with extracurricular activities like scouting programs and religious studies. Some students helped reorganize school libraries and handled administrative tasks like sorting mail.

Assignment Reporting

Throughout their placements, students documented their daily activities in reports submitted through the MBKM app. Reports contained details of lessons taught, methods used, topics covered, and other program activities. At the end of each week, students compiled the daily reports into a weekly summary report that was submitted to field supervisors for review on Saturdays or Sundays. Supervisors provided feedback on the weekly reports before approving them.

Final Assignment Activities

At the conclusion of their placements, students were given one month to compile a final report summarizing all of their initial, daily, and weekly reports including supporting documentation. The final report was formatted based on requirements from the Ministry of Education. Students were also asked to promote the program on campus by sharing their experiences with other students, though this

was limited to informal conversations when asked directly rather than formal presentations.

Challenges

Some students reported facing challenges at different stages of the program. Before placements began, some students received limited information about the program details from peers rather than official sources. During their placements, some students experienced miscommunication with their peers that affected coordination of administrative tasks. A few students were asked to teach classes outside of their assigned schools by school staff unfamiliar with the program's policies. Some schools also had inadequate facilities like projectors or learning tools needed by the students. Students placed during their 5th semester felt unprepared to develop teaching strategies for subjects they had not yet covered in their university courses. After placements ended, some students had difficulties converting their Kampus Mengajar credits into course equivalents due to unclear faculty guidelines, resulting in retaking courses.

DISCUSSION

This study aimed to investigate the implementation of the Kampus Mengajar program by English department students. The findings revealed that students went through several stages of the program: pre-assignment preparation, initial assignment activities, assignment and reporting, and end of assignment.

In the pre-assignment stage, students attended briefings, coordinated with field supervisors,

education offices, and target schools. This aligns with previous research by Widiyono et al. (2021) and the Kampus Mengajar program guidebook (Kemendikbud, 2022) which outline the pre-assignment coordination process.

For initial assignment activities, students conducted observations, designed programs based on school needs, and submitted initial reports via the MBKM application. These activities match the recommendations in the Kampus Mengajar guidebook (Kemendikbud, 2022).

During the assignment, students assisted with literacy, numeracy, technology adaptation, school administration, and English teaching. This supports findings by Setiawan and Sukanto (2021) on the types of activities conducted. For English teaching, students prepared syllabi, books, and media ahead of time, and utilized methods like translation and physical response. As Sudirjo (2010) noted, proper preparation aids student learning. The learning process also focused on creating a comfortable classroom atmosphere to facilitate comprehension, as Anwar (2021) recommended.

For reporting, students submitted daily reports through the MBKM system per program guidelines (Kemendikbud, 2022). At the end of the assignment, students prepared final reports and socialized the program, however they focused on socializing to individual students rather than campus-wide. This differs from the expectations in the Kampus Mengajar guidebook (Kemendikbud, 2021).

In terms of challenges, unclear program information caused initial doubts about participation, a finding not highlighted in previous research.

During the assignment, miscommunication with peers and misunderstandings about the program's purpose posed difficulties, as did preparing subjects outside students' university training. The changing requirements for final reports also presented obstacles after the program ended, along with issues converting program credits at students' home universities.

CONCLUSION

This study explored the implementation of Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka in English education study program through the Kampus Mengajar Program. The findings reveal several key issues faced by students before, during, and after participating in the program.

Before the program, there was a lack of clarity around course credit conversion and information provided. During the program, challenges arose regarding learning strategies, misalignment of expectations between the program and schools, and differing understanding of the program's purpose. After the program, inconsistencies with final report formatting and grade conversion disadvantaged some students.

Overall, the study highlights the need for enhanced communication, alignment, and standardization in policies and procedures to optimize the experience and impact of the Kampus Mengajar Program for English education students and partner schools. Clear guidelines around course prerequisites, credit transfer, program objectives, and reporting are warranted.

SUGGESTION

Based on these conclusions, the following recommendations are proposed:

- 1) Students should complete key courses in teaching methods, classroom management, and instructional design prior to the Kampus Mengajar Program to ensure proper preparation and capabilities.
- 2) The Kampus Mengajar Program should improve communication and socialization with partner schools to align expectations and understanding of program objectives and student roles.
- 3) English education programs should consider modifying their curriculum to have key teaching-related courses earlier in the program to better prepare students for the practical experience.
- 4) The Kampus Mengajar Program should standardize and communicate final report formats and grade conversion policies ahead of time to avoid confusion.
- 5) Future research could utilize quantitative methods, larger sample sizes, participants from other disciplines/batches, and additional instruments to generate more generalizable insights on program implementation.

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