

The Analysis of the implementation and criticism of the teaching campus program in improving the soft skills of islamic religious education students

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ABSTRACT

The MBKM policy is one of the policies created by the government, especially the Indonesian education minister, to answer the needs of students in the 4.0 era where technological progress is very rapid. One of the programs of this policy is a teaching campus which provides a platform for students to study and improve their abilities for 4-6 months outside the university or campus environment. This research aims to find out how the teaching campus program is implemented, and also to criticize this program because there are several obstacles that exist in the implementation of the teaching campus program. This research method uses a qualitative method with a critical analysis approach, by collecting data through interviews and documents. The results of the research show that the implementation of the campus teaching program has gone well because from this program students' literacy and numeracy levels have increased, apart from that, students' abilities regarding self-confidence to speak in front of many people have also increased. It's just that there are still several obstacles that occur in the field.

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Introduction

The Covid-19 outbreak has had a huge impact on the learning process and education policies, starting from learning that must be done from home (online) and several other policies that can accommodate education in Indonesia, one of which is the Freedom of Learning policy. According to the Minister of Education, Nadiem Makariem Merdeka, learning is freedom for schools and teachers to innovate and be creative and independent during the learning process. The Independent Learning Policy created by the Minister of Education has four main policies, namely the abolition of the National Examination (UN) which is replaced with an exam in accordance with the provisions of each school, student graduation indicators no longer depend on the results of the National Exam but are replaced with the results of the school exam and competency and character survey whose decisions are returned to the school, teachers have the ability to be creative in the preparation of lesson plans, And the last is that the admission of new students is carried out flexibly because previously it was carried out by zoning. (Wijaya, Mustofa, and Husain 2020)

One of the policies of the Independent Learning is the Independent Learning Independent Campus (MBKM) policy. This policy was created as a means to improve the quality of graduates of undergraduate programs with the aim of creating quality human resources who can apply their knowledge both in the business world and in accordance with their expertise, so that in practice Higher Education is a benchmark

for the success of the MBKM policy. (Nurhayati et al., 2022) The policy is based on the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture through Permendikbud No. 3 of 2020 concerning National Standards for Higher Education, which stipulates the Independent Learning Policy-Independent Campus in order to provide students with the right to have the opportunity to study outside their study programs. Thus, it is hoped that students can enrich and improve their insights and competencies in the real world in accordance with their passions and ideals, as well as relevant to their needs. (Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia 2020)

The policy is considered to be able to answer educational challenges related to the needs of students and students, so the government created the Independent Learning Campus program which provides opportunities for students to feel freedom for three semesters to gain social experience by paying more attention to technological advances and learning across study programs. (Siregar, Sahirah, and Harahap 2020) One of the programs of the policy is the teaching campus. The teaching campus is a program that provides opportunities for all students in Indonesia to gain experience outside the campus by becoming a teacher partner at school, meaning that students will carry out the teaching process for one semester at school.

Students are expected to be involved in this program because students are the next generation of the nation where the progress of education in Indonesia can be said to be in the hands of students. Students here have an important role to bring education towards positive change by providing good ideas in the life of the community, and can develop their potential through the social environment of the community. These important roles are as *agents of change*, *social control*, and *iron stock* (resilient generation) (S. Lestari, Fatonah, and Halim 2021). Until now, the teaching campus program is still being implemented and is very active, even now the teaching campus has been carried out seven times or has been in the seventh batch. This program is carried out because, according to the Minister of Education and Culture (Mendikbud) of the Republic of Indonesia, this program is expected to provide a response to the needs of the world of education in the 4.0 era or the era of the industrial revolution where this program is fully supported by the Education Fund Management Institute (LPDP) so that students who take part in this program will get pocket money every month during the teaching campus period. (Hamzah 2021)

This teaching campus program aims to empower students by collaborating with teachers and schools, which then students are expected to be able to help the school with several tasks including helping learning activities, teaching, school administration, schools introduce educational technology to the destination school, because in the 4.0 era educational technology is very influential on teaching and learning activities, even teachers are required to be able to understand and be able to adapt to technology. (Anwar 2021) The teaching campus is devoted to improving students' abilities in terms of literacy and numeracy, but it is possible that students must be able to adjust all subjects in elementary school (SD). The placement of students who take part in the teaching campus program is more focused on the 3T area (frontier, outermost, and disadvantaged). This program is quite attractive to students because students who have participated in this program can convert several courses such as KKN and PLP (Internship). (Sitopu 2022)

Based on research that has been conducted by Jaka Permana, Rina Indriani, et al. (Permana et al. 2022) there are several complaints from students who have participated in the teaching campus, namely limited quotas while there are quite a lot of students who want to take part in this program and the disbursement of pocket money that cannot be disbursed on time. This is in line with the observation made by the researcher, namely that the teaching campus provides many benefits for students in terms of *soft* and *hard skill skills*, it's just that because the recruitment of this teaching campus can be carried out by all students in Indonesia with all study programs, sometimes there are students who after being deployed to the school are unable to help the school because it is not in accordance with their expertise which is the target from this program, namely SD. (Aulia 2023) In addition, some students take part in this teaching campus program not

to gain *experience* but to be able to convert several courses and get pocket money, so that motivation like this makes the goals of the teaching campus difficult to achieve.

In essence, the MBKM Policy is one of the policies related to the wider community where there are many parties who are related to its implementation, but the most important parties are students and lecturers. Therefore, the policy must have opportunities and challenges. For lecturers and students, the opportunity that is very felt is access to information about policies and programs from MBKM. However, there are also challenges that must be faced, one of which is the student guidance program which is still often late. (Putra et al. 2022) This is in line with research conducted by Yuherman, Wahyu Nugroho and Dessy (Yuherman, Nugroho, and Sunarsi 2021)

The MBKM (Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka) Policy represents a transformative approach to education in Indonesia, aimed at providing students and lecturers with broader opportunities for growth and learning. By encouraging innovation and collaboration across various stakeholders, the policy allows students to gain practical experience and access diverse learning environments. Lecturers, on the other hand, can engage with students through programs that extend beyond traditional classroom boundaries, fostering mentorship and skill development. However, like any large-scale educational initiative, MBKM also comes with its own set of challenges.

One of the significant opportunities presented by the MBKM Policy is the accessibility of information regarding its programs and initiatives. Through socialization efforts, students and lecturers are better informed about the diverse activities offered, such as internships, independent studies, and teaching campus programs. These activities enable students to develop soft and hard skills, while lecturers gain the chance to build stronger professional networks and contribute to the development of their students. This alignment between policy goals and stakeholder benefits has the potential to elevate the quality of higher education in Indonesia.

Nevertheless, challenges persist, particularly in the area of student guidance. Research by Putra et al. (2022) highlights that delays in the student guidance program remain a critical issue. This problem not only hampers the program's implementation but also affects students' progress in completing their activities on time. Similarly, Yuherman, Nugroho, and Sunarsi (2021) have emphasized the importance of addressing these delays to ensure the effectiveness of MBKM initiatives. Late guidance can result in confusion among students, mismanagement of tasks, and even diminished enthusiasm for participating in the program.

Moreover, the involvement of multiple parties in the implementation of MBKM programs adds another layer of complexity. Coordination between universities, lecturers, students, and external partners often faces administrative bottlenecks, leading to delays and inefficiencies. To overcome these challenges, stronger communication channels and a streamlined management system are needed. Universities should work closely with government bodies to ensure that guidance and support are provided in a timely and efficient manner, benefiting all parties involved.

In conclusion, while the MBKM Policy provides significant opportunities for students and lecturers to engage in meaningful educational activities, it also poses challenges that require strategic solutions. Addressing issues such as delays in student guidance and improving coordination among stakeholders will be essential for the policy to achieve its intended outcomes. By refining its implementation processes, MBKM has the potential to become a cornerstone of Indonesia's educational transformation, equipping students and lecturers to thrive in an increasingly interconnected and competitive world.

Method

This study uses a qualitative research method with a critical analysis approach. The data collection technique in this study is using online interviews using the google meet application on several students who have participated in the teaching campus program to get stronger data based on their experience and the researcher can find the problems they face while participating in the teaching campus program, the researcher also takes data through documents, namely books and journals published a maximum of five years before, and regulations or laws that regulate teaching campus policies obtained by researchers from the Ministry of Education and Culture's online website. Based on the results of the interviews obtained, the researcher then tried to analyze the data found using a phenomenological approach. The researcher tries to explain or explain the problems that are the topic of this research in the form of narratives or discussions that can then be drawn conclusions and find solutions and suggestions that can be used to answer the problems faced. In this study, the researcher tries to analyze the implementation of the teaching campus program and try to provide criticism and answer the problems that are still faced by students who participate in the teaching campus.

Result and Discussion

Rapid development in the field of technology is one of the things that must be accepted and adjusted by the community, especially in the field of education, both teachers and students are expected to be able to adapt to existing technological developments. Technological adaptation is expected to be able to provide development in the Indonesian education system, so Nadiem Makariem as the Minister of Education formulated one of the policies, namely Independent Learning Independent Campus (MBKM). This policy is one way to accelerate the transformation of higher education in Indonesia which is expected to have a good and positive impact on growing the character and *professionalism* of students (Panguruk et al. 2022). The existence of independent learning aims to develop the potential of teachers and students to innovate and improve good quality to gain independence (Widiyono, Irfana, and Firdausia 2021).

Independent Learning Independent Campus (MBKM) is an opportunity as well as a challenge for students because this policy is expected to be a forum in dealing with the speed of technological developments where students are required to be able to develop themselves and their abilities from an early age, both *hard* and *soft skills*. In order to be able to answer the challenges of technological developments according to educational needs and be able to realize students to become scholars who have skills and insights.(Yuherman, Nugroho, and Sunarsi 2021)

The Merdeka campus package has five policies, namely the university accreditation system, studying in higher education, the ease of opening new study programs, the admission of new students and the change in status to become a university from a legal entity. Therefore, universities or colleges that can be involved in this program should be able to maintain policies in the university, be it in terms of curriculum, administration, or budget or finance. Some other policies that must be implemented by universities in order to be able to carry out the Independent Learning Independent Campus are having students who come from study programs with good accreditation and are also registered with pddikti (Manurung 2022). Research conducted by Zubaedah et al., explained that there are several things that can be done in supporting MBKM policies in higher education, namely lecturers can conduct workshops and collaborate with other lecturers from other study programs to develop courses, students can improve their abilities by taking courses from other study programs, practitioners from MBKM can do good cooperation to provide inspiration that supports activities, And the last is that institutions or universities can provide adequate facilities for MBKM service students (Z. W. Lestari et al. 2022).

The MBKM policy has several programs, including certified internships, independent studies, teaching campuses, Indonesia international student mobility award (IISMA), independent student exchanges, building villages (Thematic KKN), humanitarian projects, and research or research. (Pasaribu et al. 2021) The teaching campus is one of the programs of the MBKM policy which is currently in great demand by students. The Directorate of Learning and Student Affairs together with the Directorate General of Higher Education developed the Teaching Campus Program (KM) as a means to solve problems that arose during the Covid-19 pandemic where learning was carried out online. The teaching campus is a government program where students will become assistant teachers for four to six months in elementary schools (SD) (Rosita and Damayanti 2021) with the aim of improving literacy and numeracy and helping teachers adapt to technological developments. (Lindawati 2022)

The existence of a teaching campus that is a program of MBKM is quite attractive to students, this program has even become one of the flagship programs of the MBKM policy (Prasandha and Utomo 2022). The teaching campus has currently conducted at least seven student recruitments. Some of the requirements to participate in this program are very easy to access, including a letter of ability to participate in the teaching campus program from start to finish, a health certificate, a letter of parental consent, transcripts of grades and letters of recommendation from the campus or study program, which can be obtained from the campus, both PTN and PTS under the auspices of the Ministry of Education and Culture (Setiawan and Sukamto, 2021). In addition, to participate in this teaching campus, students do not write essays or papers or other tests, but only do administrative selection (file selection) which is then screened by the teaching campus whether students can take part in the teaching campus program or not, so that many students are interested in this program because the teaching campus opens a wide path for students.

Students who take part in this program can choose the location that will be the place to serve them, but the specifics of the school are determined by the center. Therefore, sometimes even though students have chosen their place of domicile, the distance between home and the place of service is still far enough that it requires students to find their own place to live, which is not helped by the teaching campus so this is quite difficult for students because there are some students who are new to the place of service. Most of the goals of students participating in the teaching campus are to be able to convert twenty credits with the courses on campus, especially students with a background in the education study program because in the fifth or sixth semester students have several courses that require us to go into the field such as KKN and Internship, so that by participating in this program students do not need to take the courses mentioned. Another goal is to get pocket money and experience that is very useful for students of the education study program.

Students who pass to take part in the teaching campus program go through several stages before being deployed, namely the release accompanied by the Education Office and Field Supervisors (DPL), after which students make observations in the school environment which includes observations and interviews with several parties in the school, both principals and teachers. Then, students conduct an AKM pretest for fifth grade elementary school students to find out how far literacy and numeracy are in school so that from the results of the pretest students can determine what programs must be carried out during the teaching campus process which is tailored to the needs of the school, teachers, and students, which then at the end of the service period will be a benchmark for the extent of the role or success of student programs during the teaching campus. Student activities during the teaching campus are to be a companion to teachers at school, be it teaching in the classroom, sanitizing schools, improving literacy and numeracy, and teaching technology in the world of education to teachers and students.

The teaching campus program has a good impact on students, especially students with a background in Islamic religious education study program. With this program, students actually feel that they can help *with public speaking*, which before joining the teaching campus, students often experience field fever (nervous)

when speaking in front of the class and also experience fear if students cannot accept the material presented, but after undergoing activities on campus, students are more confident to speak in front of the class because they have been trained and used to doing this during participating in the teaching campus program (Evita 2023). This is in accordance with research conducted by Pieter Sahertian, et al. (Sahertian et al. 2022), namely the implementation of *case methods* and *team-based projects* is one of the methods that is in accordance with the MBKM program and is able to provide opportunities to improve student skills, namely *creativity skills, critical thinking, communication skills, and collaboration skills*. Another research that supports this opinion is a study conducted by Endang, Khamida, et al. (Sulistiyan et al. 2022) which concluded that students from non-health faculties consider the MBKM program to be very useful as a means to improve abilities and skills that will be used as a handle after graduation.

Based on the existence of the current teaching campus, there are still several obstacles experienced by students, including pocket money that cannot be disbursed on time, even students are not given clarity about the date or week the pocket money is disbursed so that students can only guess when the funds will be disbursed. This problem has become a problem faced by students of every batch who take part in the campus teaching program. Some of the reasons given by the teaching campus regarding the delay in the funding include errors that occurred at several universities that were late in completing the file, where this program involved several parties, namely the teaching campus manager, the university, students and the school. Another reason is the number of students who participate in this program so that the disbursement of funds cannot be done directly but must be gradual. In addition, the assignment given to students can also affect the delay in disbursing the pocket funds. This problem actually has a negative impact on students because some students who take part in this program rely heavily on the pocket money to carry out programs (work programs) at school so that if the pocket money is disbursed late, students must use personal money while not all students have funds to cover the cost of the program.

This delay in pocket money disbursement has raised concerns among students, particularly those from underprivileged backgrounds. Many students rely heavily on the funding to support not only their daily needs but also to implement the planned work programs at their assigned schools. Without these funds, students face significant challenges in meeting the expectations of the teaching campus program. Some students have had to borrow money from friends or family to cover their expenses, leading to financial stress and potentially affecting their focus and performance in the program.

Furthermore, the lack of transparency regarding the disbursement schedule has exacerbated the problem. Students are often left in uncertainty, unsure of when the funds will arrive. This lack of clarity undermines their trust in the program and the managing institutions. The absence of clear communication channels between the teaching campus management, universities, and students has made it difficult to address these issues in a timely and effective manner. Many students have expressed frustration, citing that their queries about the delay are often met with vague or unsatisfactory responses.

In addition to financial challenges, the delay in pocket money also hampers the implementation of innovative teaching methods and extracurricular activities planned by students. For example, some students have designed programs that require the purchase of teaching materials, transportation costs, or even rental fees for specific venues. When the funds are delayed, these initiatives are either postponed or abandoned, which ultimately affects the quality of education provided to the students at the schools they are assigned to. This situation undermines the objectives of the teaching campus program, which aims to enrich the learning experience in under-resourced schools.

To address these issues, a more efficient and transparent system needs to be implemented for pocket money disbursement. Establishing a fixed schedule for fund release and ensuring timely communication about any delays would significantly improve the experience of participating students. Additionally, universities could collaborate more closely with the teaching campus management to streamline the verification and approval process for student files. By reducing administrative bottlenecks, the funds could be disbursed more quickly and consistently.

Lastly, it is essential to consider alternative funding mechanisms to reduce reliance on a single disbursement source. For example, providing students with an initial advance payment or setting up a contingency fund for emergencies could help alleviate financial stress during delays. Regular feedback sessions involving students, universities, and the teaching campus management could also help identify recurring issues and develop practical solutions. By addressing these challenges, the teaching campus program can ensure that it continues to be a beneficial initiative that supports both students and the communities they serve.

The teaching campus program does provide many benefits in terms of *soft skills* for students, but students who come from PTKIN cannot feel the benefits or essence of this program. This is because the teaching campus program is specialized in campuses or universities under the auspices of the Ministry of Education and Culture while PTKIN is managed by the Ministry of Religion, where all students can take part in this program. However, the implementation of the teaching campus program actually causes difficulties for students from other study programs because the target of this teaching campus is elementary school where the ability of students of the education study program is more needed. So that in its implementation, some students with other study programs who went into the field did not carry out any activities, and the school could not provide clarity on what activities the students had to do. So from the researcher's point of view there is a gap in PTKIN students, because many PTKIN students also want to take part in this program. Moreover, many of PTKIN also have students from education study programs, therefore, this program is very suitable for them. Compared to freeing all students can take part in this program, especially students under the auspices of the Ministry of Education and Culture.

This system also applies to the Pre-service PPG program which allows all graduates from any study program to participate so that sometimes the opportunity for students who graduate from education is smaller. Educational programs that are indeed the goal or goal of creating professional educators are better focused on students or graduates from educational programs, both those managed by the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Ministry of Religion. Students from other study programs who take part in this program also have difficulty converting to the credits offered because they are not linear with the student's department or study program, so some students actually do not get knowledge from the courses that are converted to the teaching campus, therefore to get material from these courses, students must retake the credits that have been converted. In addition, students outside the education study program have difficulty making outputs that are a requirement to convert to credits such as articles related to education or by making lesson plans and modules.

The krs conversion offered from the teaching campus also does not have clarity where the teaching campus offers a conversion of 20 credits, but some students get the conversion of credits below 20 credits. This raises several comparisons between students who take part in the teaching campus program, because basically the teaching campus is only a forum to provide opportunities for students to learn outside the campus, but the decision related to the conversion of credits is returned to the university and the study program. Another obstacle faced in the implementation of this teaching campus program is lecturers or assistants who are still not active in answering student problems, according to Marthaleina Ruminda, Indriyati, et al. (Sitorus et al. 2023) the success of the socialization of the MBKM policy requires a common response or idea from lecturers who act as companions to this policy and adjust to the curriculum and syllabus

that are in accordance with and oriented to the MBKM policy. However, what must be considered is to try so that the courses taken by students and taught by lecturers do not overlap so that the goals of this MBKM policy and program can be realized and succeed in producing quality undergraduate graduates.

Conclusion

The teaching campus is one of the programs of the Independent Learning policy of the teaching campus that is in great demand by students because it provides many benefits for students, including experience, pocket money, and conversion of 20 credits. The implementation of the teaching campus can be seen from the literacy and numeracy skills of students, because this program aims to improve literacy and numeracy in schools. For teaching campus students, they can grow and practice soft skills, namely the confidence to speak in front of the class. The success of this teaching campus program has not escaped some criticism from researchers, namely related to the goals of the teaching campus, which means that students who take part in the teaching campus should be from the education study program only, because the target of this program is elementary school. In addition, the pocket money from the government can be disbursed on time because this problem can also hinder student activities at school. Based on this study, the researcher can see that there are several programs from the government related to education that do not focus on education itself, such as involving many parties who are not related to education, such as teaching campuses and the Pre-service PPG program which exempts all study programs to participate. A system like this is very detrimental to prospective educators and educators because it can be an opportunity that should belong to them but belongs to someone else who is not competent in education

The teaching campus program, as part of the Independent Learning policy, has undoubtedly brought various benefits to students. Beyond the financial support and academic credit conversion, the program provides students with invaluable real-world experience. By engaging directly with literacy and numeracy initiatives in schools, participants contribute to the academic development of students while also developing their own soft skills, such as public speaking and confidence in teaching. However, the criticism regarding the inclusion of non-education majors in this program raises important questions about its alignment with the primary goals of enhancing elementary education quality.

Critics argue that allowing students from non-education backgrounds to participate in the teaching campus dilutes its core purpose. Education majors possess the pedagogical knowledge and skills necessary to effectively address the needs of elementary school students. While students from other disciplines may bring diverse perspectives, their lack of formal training in teaching methods could limit their effectiveness in the classroom. This misalignment creates challenges, not only for the program's objectives but also for the students and schools involved.

Additionally, the inclusion of non-education students in programs like the teaching campus and Pre-service PPG (Professional Teacher Education) program may disadvantage future educators. These programs are designed to equip participants with the skills and experience required for teaching. When opportunities are extended to students outside the education field, it may reduce the availability of these crucial learning experiences for those pursuing a career in teaching. This situation could potentially undermine the professional development of prospective educators, who rely on these programs as stepping stones toward becoming competent teachers.

The government's decision to make these programs more inclusive likely stems from a desire to promote broader participation and community involvement. However, this inclusivity should be balanced with a focus on quality and relevance to education. Tailoring programs like the teaching campus specifically for education majors, while creating parallel initiatives for students from other disciplines, might be a more effective approach. This would allow the program to stay true to its goal of improving literacy and numeracy while also providing meaningful opportunities for all participants.

In conclusion, the teaching campus program has immense potential to contribute to education in Indonesia. However, to maximize its impact, policymakers must address the criticisms and refine the

program's structure. Ensuring that it prioritizes education majors, improving the timeliness of pocket money disbursement, and clearly defining its objectives will enhance its effectiveness. By doing so, the teaching campus can continue to be a valuable initiative, fostering the development of both students and educators while making a tangible difference in the schools it serves.

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