

REALIZING MERDEKA BELAJAR: CASE STUDY OF MBKM TEACHING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM AT THE FAMILY COURSE PARE

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui penerapan program MBKM Asistensi Mengajar di lembaga sebagai upaya untuk mewujudkan merdeka belajar. Selama ini para siswa dan guru melakukan belajar mengajar untuk mendapatkan nilai tinggi dalam ujian sehingga pembelajaran monoton dan kurang mengasah keterampilan siswa di tingkat pendidikan dasar, menengah maupun perguruan tinggi. Akibatnya, kualitas lulusan belum memiliki kompetensi yang dibutuhkan dunia kerja. Pemerintah berupaya mengatasi masalah tersebut melalui kebijakan Merdeka Belajar. Salah satu program Merdeka Belajar bagi mahasiswa adalah Asistensi Mengajar dengan melibatkan mahasiswa untuk membantu lembaga melakukan kegiatan belajar mengajar yang menyenangkan. Penelitian studi kasus ini dilakukan di salah satu lembaga di Pare melalui observasi, wawancara dan analisa dokumen. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa program MBKM Asistensi Mengajar dengan mengirimkan mahasiswa sebagai agen perubahan ke lembaga telah membantu pelaksanaan kegiatan belajar mengajar. Siswa, guru dan mahasiswa sangat antusias meskipun menghadapi berbagai tantangan. Mahasiswa berharap adanya perubahan berkelanjutan dalam kegiatan belajar mengajar setelah program MBKM Asistensi Mengajar berakhir.

Kata kunci: Merdeka Belajar; Asistensi Mengajar; Agen Perubahan

Abstract

This study aims to determine the application of the MBKM Teaching Assistance program in institutions as an effort to realize independent learning. So far, students and teachers have been teaching and learning to get high scores in exams so that learning is monotonous and does not hone students' skills at the primary, secondary and tertiary education levels. As a result, the quality of graduates does not have the competencies needed by the world of work. The government is trying to overcome this problem through the Merdeka Belajar policy. One of the Merdeka Belajar programs for students is Teaching Assistance by involving students to help institutions carry out fun teaching and learning activities. This case study research was conducted at one of the institutions in Pare through observation, interviews and document analysis. The results showed that the MBKM Teaching Assistance program by sending students as agents of change to institutions has helped the implementation of teaching and learning activities. Students, teachers and students are very enthusiastic despite facing various challenges. Students hope that there will be sustainable changes in teaching and learning activities after the MBKM Teaching Assistance program ends.

Keywords: Merdeka Belajar; Teaching Assistance; Agent of Change.

Introduction

The problem of human resource quality is still an issue that must be resolved by the Indonesian government to date. One of them is the mismatch between the competencies of university graduates and those needed in the world of work. When viewed from the learning process in schools, monotonous learning conditions and tend to pursue test scores make students and students lack opportunities to develop themselves. If no changes are made in the national education system, then one day human labor can be replaced by machine skills and technological sophistication. So, in an effort to overcome this problem, the Government of Indonesia through the Ministry of Education and Culture, Research and Technology (Kemendikbudristek) has issued a new policy, namely Merdeka Belajar. The Merdeka Belajar program is a direction for learning that focuses on improving human resources (HR) by improving the national education system (Sobara, 2022), especially regarding literacy and numeracy skills.

The Merdeka Belajar program involves all elements in the world of education, including students, teachers, lecturers and education personnel at various levels of education. At the tertiary level, the Merdeka Learning Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) policy includes autonomy in opening new study programs, automatic reaccreditation of universities, freedom and ease of requirements for Legal Entity Universities and the right to study three semesters outside the study program for students so that the semester credit system (SKS) is no longer based on the number of lecture meetings but activity hours. Off-campus activities included in the MBKM program by the Ministry of Education and Culture include internships/work practices, village projects, teaching in schools, student exchanges, research/research, entrepreneurial activities, independent studies/projects, and humanitarian projects (Sumadi et al., 2023). Students can exercise the right to three semesters outside the study program by choosing the form of activity available. Students can determine their education, not only on campus but can study in industry, villages and other places outside the university through various projects (Tambunan, 2021). So, freedom to learn at every level of education can be interpreted as freedom and independence to choose according to their respective roles and desires.

From several choices of MBKM activity forms, there is a connection between Merdeka Belajar program in primary and secondary education and higher education programs, namely teaching activities in schools facilitated by the Ministry of Education and Culture in collaboration with the Education Fund Management Institution (LPDP). One of these programs is Teaching Assistance. Referring to the Ministry of Education and Culture website (Wahyuni & Riyanto, 2022) the MBKM Teaching Assistance program aims to provide opportunities for students to learn and develop themselves outside the study program. Students participating in MBKM Teaching Assistance are under the guidance of Field Supervisors (DPL). Students who are selected through selection will be placed in institutions.

The main tasks of the students at the institution are teaching assistance and technology adaptation. Students are expected to help schools to better organize the teaching and learning process. In accordance with the concept of teaching assistance, the main objective is to provide opportunities for students who are interested in education to deepen their knowledge by teaching in schools and help improve the equitable distribution of education quality (Yang & Lin, 2022). The focus of learning activities is strengthening basic literacy and numeracy.

The involvement of students in MBKM activities cannot be separated from their role as agents of change in society. In social life, students have an important role as agents of change, social controllers and resilient generations (Pradana et al., 2023). Carrying out the role as agents of change, students can take actions that bring positive changes in society. Students not only convey good ideas, but are involved in carrying out these ideas

as actors. With the knowledge gained, students can apply it in real life in the social community. Through these off-campus activities, students can develop their potential.

The results of this study are expected to provide an overview of the implementation of the MBKM Teaching Assistance program so that it can be used as a reference and input for students who will participate in this program and the preparation of activity programs in target schools in the next period. In addition, this study can be a recommendation for universities regarding the implementation of the MBKM Teaching Assistance program. The indirect benefit for universities is that it can be used as a reference material in compiling the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum and comprehensive consideration for students who will register for the MBKM program. For institutions, education offices, and implementing committees, this study can provide an overview of what programs can help improve the quality of education in their respective work units, materials for evaluating and improving program implementation, and encouraging collaboration between various parties to realize independent learning in institutions.

Research Method

This study uses a qualitative research design and adopts an interpretive paradigm, where researchers engage in intensive and ongoing interactions and experiences with participants (da Silva & de Freitas, 2022). Qualitative research is conducted because a problem or issue needs to be explored further to understand the problems that occur in a particular context.

To explore real issues more deeply in the context of social research such as MBKM Teaching Assistance activities, this research uses a case study research strategy. This research began on September 4, 2023 until December 28, 2023. This research involved two students of the English Language Education Study Program, Zainul Hasan Genggong Islamic University.

This case study research data uses multiple sources (Santoso et al., 2023). The methods used to collect data in this study include observation, interviews and document analysis. Observation was carried out during the activity in the form of direct observation at the institution with reference to an observation sheet containing points that need to be observed. Interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner to teachers. Interviews in this study refer to research questions with a question point guide. Interview data in the form of interview recordings were then analyzed.

Content and thematic analysis were conducted to interpret the data. The thematic analysis method was used to analyze interview data in the form of recordings and interview notes through the transcription process and displayed in text form. Content analysis was conducted to process data from report documents. To validate the accuracy of the research results, triangulation with different sources of information was used (Qu et al., 2022). The sources of information were observation journals, interview transcripts and documents. Data analysis was reported descriptively and narratively following a logical and chronological flow (Zeng, 2022).

Findings and Discussion

After collecting and analyzing data from various sources to find out how the implementation of the MBKM Teaching Assistance program, several findings were obtained which are discussed as follows:

a. Implementation of Teaching Assistance at The Family Course

MBKM Teaching Assistance activities at The Family Course took place from September 4, 2023 to December 28, 2023. Students participating in MBKM Teaching

Assistance make several preparations. Students follow the debriefing given by the Field Supervisor. Through this debriefing, students learn several things that have not been obtained in lectures in their study program. In addition, in interviews, individual students conveyed several other preparations such as reading guidebooks, studying materials, and seeking information on how to deal with students.

From the observation results, it can be seen the profile of the institution, student and teacher profiles, facilities and infrastructure, programs and institutional culture. From the report on analyzing the situation of the institution, facilities are inadequate. In addition, the ability of teachers to use technology for learning is also limited. After knowing the condition of the institution, students compile a work program including activities that are the main focus of the Teaching Assistance MBKM program based on the analysis of observation results.

Students often discuss activity programs and are adjusted to their respective competencies and interests. They are responsible for both group programs and individual tasks in both teaching assistance and technology adaptation. Teaching assistance activities are carried out according to a schedule that has been discussed with the accompanying teacher. Students and students come according to the schedule that has been arranged alternately. To carry out these tasks, students coordinate with teachers regarding materials and tasks. They become the main teacher, not helping the teacher teach. However, students feel a sense of satisfaction with the success of teaching in a class without a teacher. According to them, students are very enthusiastic about learning in class with students.

Technology adaptation is the program that students do the least. According to them, teachers rarely use technology for learning. As a solution, students help teachers make learning videos, help teachers prepare materials using power point, and occasionally invite students to do synchronous learning with Zoom Meeting.

Every day students write down their daily activities in a daily report. The description of the implementation of MBKM Teaching Assistance activities implies that students are given the freedom to carry out their duties. MBKM Teaching Assistance activities are intended to assist teachers in teaching and learning activities where students and teachers can collaborate. Students hope that teachers will continue the activities that have been carried out well after the MBKM Teaching Assistance program ends.

b. Challenges of Teaching Assistance at The Family Course

Students face several challenges in implementing the Teaching Assistance MBKM. Some of the student challenges are listed below:

- a) Students with various social, economic and cognitive backgrounds are a tough challenge for students, especially when teaching in class. There are still many students who do not understand learning.
- b) Inadequate facilities. According to students, the challenge of the lack of facilities is enough to hinder the implementation of the teaching and learning process. From the results of observations, the condition of the facilities at the institution is still inadequate.
- c) According to students, the challenges faced are not easy, so students try to adjust to the situation and conditions in carrying out the activity programs that have been prepared.

c. Realizing Freedom of Learning through Teaching Assistance

In institutions, teachers play an important role in realizing independent learning. Independent teachers have the freedom to design the learning process that is carried out.

They are teachers who have agency or autonomy and are free from pressure (Deta et al., 2023). Teachers as agents of change and as professionals can use their freedom according to the context to achieve the expected learning outcomes (Kodrat, 2021). Thus, free teachers will do various ways to provide fun learning and encourage students to develop their abilities.

The results of this study reveal how teachers have not become independent teachers. They have not carried out learning activities that are fun, still monotonous and there is no enthusiasm for change. This can be caused by various factors as revealed by (Arjanto et al., 2022), namely age, limited understanding and limited ability to use technology for learning. Through the Teaching Assistance program, students show how to teach fun to students by building meaningful interactions and delivering material in an interesting way.

Apart from the teachers, the results of this study imply that students are also not yet independent students. Independent students are students who have the opportunity to develop their competence personally (Cao & Zhu, 2022), meaning that each child is different so they can learn in different ways. With the Teaching Assistance program, students can experience learning freely. They are very enthusiastic about learning with students. According to the students, the students warmly welcomed the presence of the Teaching Assistance students.

There are several opportunities where students as agents of change realize their freedom to learn by becoming independent students through Teaching Assistance. First, when students decide to participate in Teaching Assistance, they use their freedom to 'freely' make choices according to their desire to study on campus and go to society. This can be seen from students' recognition that they participated in the activity on their own accord.

Secondly, when students plan their activities during the assignment period, they are free to determine what types of activities they want to do, free to take any role in the activities that are arranged. They finally learned to recognize each other's competencies and understand each other's strengths and weaknesses. Students do not arbitrarily determine what activities to carry out, but rather coordinate with other students so that they can express themselves more optimally.

Third, in carrying out the planned activities, students are given freedom by the school. However, in practice, their freedom is limited by the time, facilities and resources available. In this case, students learn to find ways to solve challenges and problems. Students must make decisions by considering the risks faced so that students can contribute to the institution with their knowledge and bring positive changes, becoming agents of change (Zamprogna et al., 2022).

d. Students Learn from Teaching Assistance

In general, the perception of students and institutions towards the implementation of the Teaching Assistance program is quite positive. They can feel the benefits gained and lessons learned from this program. In interviews, teachers greatly appreciated and felt helped by the presence of the Teaching Assistance program students. Students also said that they received extraordinary lessons and benefits from the Teaching Assistance program. Some of the things learned by the Teaching Assistance students were conveyed in the following interview:

- a) The Teaching Assistance Program makes students care about education. This program can show that students care about education and take concrete steps even from small things.
- b) Being a teacher is not easy. After completing the program, students said that the challenges of being a teacher, especially in an institution, are enormous. Apart from

the lack of facilities, students who are diverse in various aspects require competent and professional teachers so that students are interested in learning with the teacher. Students are quite successful in teaching because they use various interesting ways so that students are enthusiastic about learning.

- c) Making changes in the institution through the Teaching Assistance program is challenging. Although teachers and students responded positively to students and the Teaching Assistance program, students found it difficult to make sustainable changes in the institution and were pessimistic that what they had done both in teaching assistance and technology adaptation would be continued by the teachers.
- d) Self-development, especially life skills. Students participating in Teaching Assistance said that they learned many things from this activity, especially skills and life skills. All students said that they became more grateful individuals after running the Teaching Assistance program where they met students with diverse conditions. Students also learned to communicate effectively with group mates, teachers, and students. Students feel more confident after participating in the Teaching Assistance program.

From the findings and discussions that have been described, it can be seen how the Teaching Assistance activities are carried out by participating students, what are the challenges faced and what students learn. The results of the study also reveal how the implementation of the Teaching Assistance program is an effort to realize independent learning.

Conclusion

From the results of this study, it can be concluded that the Teaching Assistance program conducted at The Family Course institution has provided opportunities for students, teachers and students to realize independent learning. This is shown by students with their motivation and competence to take part in the Teaching Assistance program at the institution. By participating in the Teaching Assistance program, students exercise their right to learn new things and develop themselves outside the campus.

Independent students through the Teaching Assistance program have had a positive impact on the institution to help students become independent individuals during the program. Independent students can develop their competencies according to their talents and interests. During the program, students are very enthusiastic about participating in the activities carried out by students. Students compile various activity program plans at the institution including teaching assistance and technology adaptation according to the results of observations so that they have been adjusted to the needs of the institution, especially students.

There are several challenges in carrying out the Teaching Assistance program at The Family Course institution such as the inadequate condition of the institution's facilities, the diverse conditions of students, and the limitations of teachers and students using technology. Nevertheless, students make every effort so that activities can run well and have an impact on the institution.

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