

MBKM Policy Study: Independent Learning Curriculum Policy Analysis in the Indonesian Language Study Program Islamic University of Nusantara Bandung

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ABSTRACT

The Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) policy is expected to be able to answer the challenges of higher education in facing the demands of a dynamic world of work. This study aims to analyze the implementation of the MBKM policy in the Indonesian Language Education Study Program at Universitas Islam Nusantara Bandung. The approach used is descriptive qualitative with a policy study design, referring to the POAC managerial function (Planning, Organizing, Actuating, and Controlling). Data were collected through in-depth interviews, documentation studies, and participatory observations of lecturers, students, and study program managers. The results show that the MBKM policy has been implemented through various programs such as Teaching Campus and student entrepreneurship, but still faces obstacles such as cross-institutional coordination and limited technical understanding among students. Periodic evaluation and outcome-based curriculum adjustments are important strategies in addressing these challenges. This study concludes that the implementation of MBKM shows a positive direction, but still needs institutional strengthening, increased human resource competence, and integrated information system support. The findings are expected to be a reference for stakeholders in formulating higher education policies that are more adaptive and contextual.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesian higher education is currently in a significant transformative phase, adapting to the pace of globalization, digital disruption, and the need for flexible, adaptive, and highly competitive human resources. To respond to these challenges, the government through the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemendikbudristek) has launched the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka policy. (MBKM) as the main strategy for renewing the national higher education system. This policy provides opportunities for students to study outside their study program and home campus for three semesters, as stated in Permendikbud No. 3 of 2020.

The reality in the field of MBKM implementation is not only a symbol of educational reform, but also shifts the old paradigm towards a more participatory, collaborative, and learning achievement-based system. This program requires universities to reorient the curriculum based on *outcome-based education* (OBE), emphasizing the integration of cross-sector learning experiences and the world of work. Therefore, the study of the implementation of this policy is important, especially in the realm of study programs, which are the micro nodes of the dynamics of the higher education system.

Despite having been running for several years, the implementation of the MBKM policy in the field still faces a number of challenges. Initial research conducted at the Indonesian Language Education Study Program at Universitas Islam Nusantara (UNINUS) Bandung revealed limitations in external partnerships, constraints in curriculum flexibility, and a lack of technical readiness from students and lecturers in welcoming the implementation of MBKM. This shows the gap between the ideals of national policy and the reality of implementation at the institutional level, especially in private universities.

The implementation of an education policy is not only determined by the ideal design, but also by the readiness of the implementing actors in the field. When the spirit of change is carried through the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) program, not all institutions are in an equal starting position. This is reflected in various study findings that highlight the reality of MBKM implementation in various contexts. Utomo's study (2021) shows that the gap in MBKM implementation between state and private universities is quite significant, especially regarding institutional capacity and resource support. Meanwhile, Siahaan (2022) noted that the lack of preparedness of lecturers, minimal socialization, and weak curriculum mapping are the main structural obstacles. This problem becomes more complex when it comes to the Indonesian Language study program, which has a unique learning structure and is rooted in linguistic and cultural aspects.

Based on the educational policy analysis framework, the POAC (Planning, Organizing, Actuating, Controlling) approach developed by Terry (2010) is a relevant tool for understanding the dynamics of planning, implementing, and evaluating MBKM policies at the study program level. Through this approach, researchers can assess the extent to which study programs have developed MBKM-based curriculum planning strategies, formed supporting organizational structures, implemented MBKM programs in real terms, and monitored and evaluated their achievements and impacts on students.

This study focuses on the analysis of the implementation of the MBKM policy in the Indonesian Language Education Study Program at UNINUS using a qualitative descriptive policy study design. This study not only examines policy documents, but also records narratives from policy actors, lecturers, students, and study program managers so that it can present a holistic picture of the MBKM policy practice from the perspective of implementing actors. This is in accordance with Lipsky's (1980) idea regarding the importance of the role of *street-level bureaucrats* in the success of public policy.

This research is expected to provide real contributions in expanding the discourse on the importance of campus autonomy, curriculum renewal, and adjustment strategies carried out by private universities. In this context, adaptation efforts to national policies such as MBKM are a challenge in themselves that require creativity and responsiveness from each institution, especially in managing resources and strengthening its institutional capacity.

The results obtained from this research can be a strategic reference for faculties and universities in designing a support system for the implementation of MBKM that is more in line with real needs in the field. With a more contextual and sustainable approach, it is hoped that the MBKM policy will not only be an administrative obligation, but can truly have a positive impact on the quality of higher education (Purwanto et al., 2023).

Furthermore, this study also has practical impacts. For students and lecturers, this study is a space for reflection on the effectiveness of MBKM implementation, both in terms of process and results. For study program managers, the results of this analysis can be used as material for improving and formulating internal policies. Meanwhile, for policy makers at the national level, this research offers an empirical perspective from the field to improve the design of MBKM policies to be more inclusive and relevant to the real conditions of private universities.

Integration between national policies and local readiness of higher education institutions is an important aspect underlying this research. Therefore, this research focuses on answering four main questions, namely: how the MBKM policy planning process is carried out, how the strategy of organizing and involving resources is carried out, what is the form of real implementation in the field, and how the evaluation system is applied during the implementation of MBKM at UNINUS. This series of analyses is expected to not only enrich theoretical insights, but also provide practical recommendations that are relevant to the development of higher education policies in Indonesia.

The transformation of higher education through the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) program is an evolutionary process that cannot happen instantly. This process requires shared awareness, cross-element synergy, and the courage to continue experimenting at all levels of the institution. Thus, this research is present as a small contribution in the collective movement towards higher education that is more qualified, relevant, and in favor of the future of the nation's generation.

2. METHOD

In order to fully understand the dynamics of the implementation of the Independent Learning Independent Campus (MBKM) policy implemented in the Indonesian Language Education Study Program at Universitas Islam Nusantara Bandung, this study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive study type. The selection of this approach is adjusted to the characteristics of the issues raised, because it concerns subjective experiences, perceptions of policy actors, and the context of implementing higher education policies at the local level. Through a qualitative approach, researchers can explore meanings, values, and dynamics that cannot be reached by quantitative methods (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The method used is a policy study with an emphasis on three main aspects, namely: policy formulation, implementation, and evaluation (Dunn, 2018). The main analytical framework used in this study is the management functions according to George R. Terry (1958), which include Planning, Organizing, Actuating, and Controlling (POAC). The POAC model was chosen because it is able to provide a systematic view of how MBKM policies are planned, organized, implemented, and evaluated at the micro-institutional level, namely study programs.

The location of this research was determined purposively, namely at Universitas Islam Nusantara (UNINUS) Bandung. The selection of the location was based on the consideration that UNINUS is one of the private universities that has actively adopted the MBKM policy in the curriculum of study programs, especially in the Indonesian Language Education Study Program. This purposive determination of the location is supported by Patton's argument (2002) which states that the strategy for selecting informants and locations in qualitative research is based on the level of relevance and meaningfulness to the focus of the study.

The subjects in this study were determined through purposive sampling with predetermined criteria. The main informants included: (1) Head of Study Program, as the strategic decision maker and manager of curriculum policy; (2) Lecturers in charge of courses, especially those involved in the

implementation of MBKM programs such as internships, campus teaching, and humanitarian projects; (3) Students who have participated in at least one form of MBKM activity, and (4) Academic administration staff who have a technical role in the implementation of MBKM at the study program level. This strategy is in line with Moleong's (2021) view, which states that informants in qualitative research must have knowledge and direct involvement in the phenomena being studied.

Data collection techniques were carried out through method triangulation, namely: in-depth interviews, documentation studies, and participant observation. Interviews were conducted in a semi-structured format to provide flexibility in digging up information from key informants. Interview guides were developed based on POAC indicators and reviewed in advance to ensure content validity. Documentation studies included analysis of official documents such as curricula, MBKM guidebooks, national regulations, and program implementation reports. Meanwhile, participant observation was conducted in relevant academic and non-academic activities to understand the real practices of policy implementation in the field (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014).

Data analysis in this study follows the stages according to Miles and Huberman (2014), namely: (1) Data reduction, which includes selection, focusing, and simplifying field data into main themes; (2) Presentation of data through descriptive narratives, interview quotes, and thematic matrices; and (3) Drawing conclusions and verification, which are iterative and continuously reviewed during the research process. Data validity was tested using source and method triangulation techniques, and member checking was carried out with key informants to ensure the validity of the findings.

The selection of qualitative methods with this policy study design is not without consideration. As stated in the study by Fitriyah and Suyanto (2022) in the *Journal of Educational Administration*, this approach has proven to be able to capture the complexity of educational policies that involve many actors, values, and contexts that are constantly changing. The same thing was also found in the study by Yuliana and Anwar (2023) in the *Journal of Islamic Education Management*, which showed that the POAC model is able to provide a structured and easy-to-map policy implementation map for the purposes of formulating new policies.

The research method used in this study is designed not only to answer research questions, but also to present a complete, realistic, and meaningful picture of how MBKM policies are implemented in the context of specific study programs, including the accompanying obstacles and opportunities. This approach is expected to be able to contribute both at the practical and academic levels in the development of inclusive and contextual higher education policies.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This research was conducted at Universitas Islam Nusantara (UNINUS) Bandung, one of the private universities located in West Java. The selection of this location was not without reason but was chosen purposively, because UNINUS has become part of a university that seeks to implement the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) policy in its learning system.

Specifically, the focus of the research is directed at the Indonesian Language and Literature Education Study Program which has integrated the MBKM concept into their curriculum. This approach is considered relevant to explore more deeply how the policy is implemented at the study program level which has a unique character in terms of language and culture.

Indonesian Language and Literature Education Study Program (S1) Department of Language Education, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Nusantara Islamic University. Latest Accreditation Ranking: VERY GOOD BAN-PT Decree Number: 3767/SK/BAN-PT/Ak.KP/S/IX/2023. The Study Program Address is Jalan Soekarno-Hatta No. 530, Bandung City, West Java Province. The Indonesian Language and Literature Education Study Program (PBSI) has 9 permanent lecturers and 149 regular active students.

The vision of the Indonesian Language and Literature Education Study Program (PBSI) is "To become an Indonesian Language and Literature Education Study Program that excels at the national

and international levels in 2030 based on the Islamic values of Ahlussunnah Wal Jama'ah An-Nahdliyah", and has the following objectives:

1. Producing superior language and literature educators and education personnel, who have academic and professional skills, master science and technology, and are of noble character and proactive;
2. Producing Indonesian Language and Literature educators and education personnel who have local wisdom and an Indonesian perspective and play an active role in community development;
3. Producing quality research in the field of Islamic education so that it can be used for the benefit of developing science;
4. Producing quality community service in the field of Islamic Education so as to be able to contribute to the life of society at large;
5. Establishing cooperation with various parties in the fields of education, research and community service based on the principles of equality and mutual benefit.

Findings

Researchers found that the Indonesian Language and Literature Education Study Program (PBSI) at Universitas Islam Nusantara has shown a high commitment in implementing the Independent Learning-Independent Campus (MBKM) policy. One of the main indicators is the active involvement of lecturers in carrying out their roles and responsibilities, both in academic and non-academic activities that are oriented towards student development. This information was obtained from the results of interviews with the Head of the Study Program who stated that the implementation of MBKM was not only an administrative formality, but was actually carried out in a real and structured manner.

One concrete form of MBKM implementation found in this study is the implementation of the Campus Teaching Program Batch 7 of 2024. In this activity, PBSI involved 10 Field Supervisors (DPL) and 65 students who were placed in 59 partner schools. This activity shows that PBSI has taken an active role in supporting the improvement of the quality of basic education in various schools. Moreover, the involvement of students in this activity also opens up space for them to learn directly in the field, hone their teaching skills, and strengthen social sensitivity to educational problems.

The main focus of the implementation of the Kampus Mengajar Program is improving students' literacy and numeracy. This is in line with national priorities in education, where students' basic abilities are an important foundation in developing other competencies. PBSI students who are members of this program are encouraged to design and implement various creative and enjoyable learning strategies so that the teaching and learning process becomes more meaningful for students in target schools.

In addition, the implementation of this program is also accompanied by a systematic evaluation and monitoring mechanism. Evaluations are carried out periodically to assess the effectiveness of the activities that have been carried out and to identify areas that still need strengthening. The monitoring process is carried out by the Higher Education Coordinator, DPL, and mentor teachers at each school. Cooperation between these parties is key to ensuring that the activities carried out by students are not only carried out well, but also have a real impact on students and schools.

Partnerships with various parties are also an important element in the success of MBKM implementation in PBSI. This study program has established productive cooperation with the Education Office and 59 target schools. This form of collaboration is not only administrative, but also substantive in supporting the implementation of learning programs, as well as in providing the space and facilities needed by students to carry out their roles optimally.

PBSI also encourages students to develop their entrepreneurial potential through an independent entrepreneurship program. One of the real results of this activity is the birth of the "Serundeng Kelapa" product which is part of the students' scientific research. This product not only shows the students' creativity, but also proves that the implementation of MBKM is able to produce applicable innovations

and has economic value. Through this program, students not only learn to become educators, but are also equipped with an entrepreneurial spirit that is relevant to the demands of the world of work and today's community life.

Program has implemented the MBKM policy optimally with a collaborative, applicable, and sustainable approach. The active involvement of lecturers, students, and external partners proves that MBKM is not just a discourse, but has become a real practice in the educational process in higher education.

Table 1. Activity Student on School Target Campus Teach Force 7

School Placement	Number of Students (based on SK)	Number of Students Active	Number of Students Not active	Information
SD	43	43	-	
JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL	20	20	-	
Vocational School	2	2	-	
Total	65	65	-	

Based on table 1, it can be seen that the students of the Campus Teaching Program have been spread across three target school levels, namely Elementary Schools (SD), Junior High Schools (SMP), and School Vocational High School (SMK).

Discussion

The Independent Learning Independent Campus (MBKM) policy in the Indonesian Language and Literature Education Study Program, Universitas Islam Nusantara (UNINUS) shows concrete steps in adopting national policies into learning practices. Based on the research results, the implementation of MBKM has covered aspects of planning, organizing, implementing, and controlling (POAC). Each of these elements is in line with the managerial theory by George R. Terry (1958) which emphasizes the importance of these four functions in the success of an education policy.

Based on the results of the research that has been conducted, the implementation of the Independent Learning Independent Campus (MBKM) policy in the Indonesian Language and Literature Education Study Program shows a number of important aspects that can be explained comprehensively. This policy is implemented through various strategic stages involving the planning process, organizing resources, implementing, and evaluating the program systematically and collaboratively. Each stage shows the active involvement of all elements in the study program environment, including internal parties such as lecturers and students, as well as external partners as part of the implementation of the MBKM-based curriculum. The description of the process and dynamics of implementing the policy can provide a comprehensive picture of the readiness and commitment of the institution in implementing higher education policies that are adaptive and based on the needs of the times.

MBKM planning in the Indonesian Language Study Program is carried out by reviewing central policies such as Permendikbud No. 3 of 2020 and adjusting them to institutional characteristics. This activity reflects a strategic alignment approach in educational administration, where national policy objectives are translated into local policies through systematic internal coordination (Giacquinta, 2021). This finding strengthens the policy implementation theory according to Mazmanian & Sabatier (1983), which states that clarity of policy formulation and organizational capacity greatly determine the success of implementation. In the context of UNINUS, planning is carried out through a curriculum coordination forum, reading collaboration opportunities, and integrating Graduate Learning Outcomes

(CPL) with MBKM activities. This is in line with the participatory policy planning approach which emphasizes the importance of multi-actor involvement in the policy process (Kezar & Maxey, 2022).

In terms of organization, the PBSI Study Program formed an MBKM implementation team consisting of lecturers, course conversion coordinators, and academic administrators. This practice reflects the principle of decentralization of higher education management as stated by Clark (1983) in the concept of the triangle of coordination, namely the relationship between government, academics, and the labor market. Strengthening the organization is also shown by lecturer training, adjustment of the academic information system, and integration of the lecturer's *tridharma* with MBKM activities. In the view of Robbins & Coulter (2022), good organization not only creates a clear structure but also builds a culture of engagement and learning agility among lecturers and students. This finding also supports the research of Fitriyah and Suyanto (2022) that a flexible organizational structure plays a very important role in implementing MBKM effectively.

The implementation of the MBKM policy at UNINUS is carried out through socialization, selection, and mentoring of students involved in various programs. One good practice is the implementation of the Campus Mengajar Batch 7 of 2024 which involved 65 students and 10 DPLs in 59 partner schools. This activity clearly embodies the principle of experiential learning introduced by Kolb (1984), where students learn through real practice in the field. Moreover, the implementation of MBKM activities shows a transformative learning approach as stated by Mezirow (1997), namely the existence of a reflective process from students towards contextual learning experiences. This is reinforced by research by Yuliana & Anwar (2023) that MBKM activities encourage students to build the meaning of learning autonomously and critically.

MBKM program evaluation is carried out periodically through student reports, activity reflections, and observations of DPL and mentor teachers. This evaluation model refers to the formative and summative approaches (Rossi, Lipsey, & Freeman, 2019), with a focus on the effectiveness of activities and the achievement of success indicators such as increasing student literacy-numeracy and participation of external partners. These findings are in line with Dunn's (2018) policy evaluation theory, which states that the success of implementing education policies is not only measured by administrative output, but also long-term outcomes such as changes in student competency and campus-community relations. Evaluation is also used to improve the MBKM course conversion system that is adjusted to the local needs of the study program.

Based on the results of the discussion, the implementation of the Independent Learning Independent Campus (MBKM) policy in the Indonesian Language and Literature Education Study Program, Universitas Islam Nusantara can be analyzed using the SWOT approach. This analysis reflects the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges faced during the planning process to implementation. This approach provides a comprehensive picture of the readiness of the study program in implementing MBKM, including internal potential that can be optimized and external obstacles that need to be anticipated strategically.



Figure 1. SWOT analysis of MBKM implementation at UNINUS

Based on the table that has been presented, it can be seen that the strategy to strengthen the implementation of the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) program requires an intensive collaborative approach between universities and various stakeholders, both internal and external. Collaboration between campuses and the government, as well as with external partners, is one of the main keys in answering various challenges in implementing the program. This approach not only allows the exchange of resources and ideas, but also opens up wider innovation space to create adaptive and contextual programs. Through this collaboration, potential internal weaknesses and external obstacles can be anticipated more effectively and with solutions.

The obstacles that may arise in its implementation can be minimized significantly. The program coordinator at the university level, student participants, and Field Supervisors (DPL) show solid synergy in carrying out various Kampus Mengajar activities. Harmonious working relationships and open communication between parties are the determining factors for this success. This reflects a strong culture of cooperation, where each party has a clear role and supports each other in order to achieve the program's goals. This collaboration even extends to the schools and the Education Office, which also play an active role in supporting the implementation of the program, both from an administrative and technical perspective.

The active involvement of schools and the Education Office shows trust and recognition of the real contribution of students in the primary and secondary education environment. This support indirectly creates a conducive environment and encourages the sustainability of the program more optimally. In other words, the success of the implementation of MBKM does not only depend on the internal university, but also depends on the collaborative ecosystem across institutions that is built sustainably.

As a strategic step to strengthen the program going forward, the study program has made a number of adjustments. One of them is the intensification of cooperation with partner institutions through the renewal of the memorandum of understanding (MoU) which is more adaptive to field needs. The addition of a more flexible program scheme is also part of the effort to expand the scope and effectiveness of MBKM implementation. In addition, the development of comprehensive training modules and intensive mentoring for students are carried out to ensure their readiness to face challenges in the field. In terms of institutions, strengthening the academic information system is also

carried out as part of managerial reform, so that the documentation and evaluation process of program implementation runs transparently, efficiently, and accountably.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the analysis and discussion of the implementation of the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) policy in the Indonesian Language Education Study Program, Universitas Islam Nusantara Bandung, it can be concluded that the implementation of the policy has shown a positive and progressive direction, although it is still faced with various technical and structural challenges. This study specifically examines the dimensions of policy implementation within the framework of the POAC managerial function: Planning, Organizing, Actuating, and Controlling, in order to obtain a comprehensive picture of the readiness and reality of MBKM implementation at the study program level.

The MBKM program planning process is carried out systematically and participatively, starting from reviewing national policies to adjusting the curriculum at the study program level. The curriculum development has referred to the principle of outcome-based learning, where graduate learning outcomes (CPL) are aligned with eight forms of MBKM activities, such as internships, campus teaching, and entrepreneurship. In addition, the involvement of internal campus elements and external partners is also an important factor in the planning process. In terms of organization, the Indonesian Language Study Program has formed an MBKM implementing structure consisting of lecturers, a curriculum team, and administrative staff. Each element is given clear responsibilities according to its function, including preparing learning plans, mentoring students, and coordinating with partners. Support for human resource readiness is also carried out through training and workshops that provide lecturers with an understanding of the implementation of the MBKM curriculum. This shows that the organization process at the study program level is quite mature and adaptive. At the implementation stage, MBKM activities have been carried out in various forms, such as the Campus Teaching Program and entrepreneurship activities. Students are given the freedom to choose programs according to their interests, and they are provided with technical guidance and guidance from field lecturers. The program ran relatively smoothly thanks to good cooperation between students, lecturers, partner schools, and the education office.

However, several obstacles were still found, such as obstacles to cross-institutional coordination and the unequal understanding of students regarding the credit conversion mechanism. In terms of supervision and evaluation, the study program has carried out periodic monitoring and evaluation to measure the effectiveness of the implementation of MBKM. The evaluation was carried out using a formative and summative approach, covering learning outcomes, student performance, and partner satisfaction. Feedback from all parties is used as a reflection material to improve implementation in the next period. The study program has also begun to build an academic information system that better supports reporting and documentation of MBKM activities.

Overall, the results of this study conclude that the implementation of MBKM in the Indonesian Language Study Program at UNINUS has been on a positive and progressive track. Although there are still several structural and technical challenges, institutional commitment, partner support, and active involvement of the academic community are key to creating learning practices that are more flexible, contextual, and relevant to the needs of the times. This study also emphasizes the importance of the POAC managerial approach in managing MBKM-based curriculum transformation, as a real contribution to strengthening the quality of higher education in Indonesia, especially in private universities.

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