

Implementation of The Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) Curriculum in Addressing The Problems of Economic Education In The Era of Disruption and Society 5.0 at Jambi University

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Abstract

Keywords:

MBKM, economic education problems, disruption era, Society 5.0

Facing the era of disruption and Society 5.0, the field of education plays an important role in improving the quality of human resources. Therefore, the government has implemented the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) curriculum. This study aims to understand the implementation of the MBKM curriculum in addressing economic education issues in the era of disruption and Society 5.0, to examine its effectiveness, and to identify solutions to overcome obstacles in its implementation. This research employs a qualitative method with a descriptive design. Informants were selected using a purposive sampling technique, involving students as key informants and additional informants including the Head of the Economics Education Study Program, the Secretary of the Social Science Education Department, and several economics education lecturers at Jambi University, Indonesia. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation, and analyzed using Nvivo 12 software.

The results show that: (1) the implementation of the MBKM curriculum provides a positive direction for the development of students' skills through experiential learning; (2) the effectiveness of MBKM is reflected in students' improved knowledge and skills, particularly in critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration; and (3) solutions for implementation require continuous curriculum adjustments and improvements.

The implications of this study indicate that the MBKM curriculum can address the challenges of economic education in the era of disruption and Society 5.0 if implemented optimally and continuously evaluated. This study also suggests the need for strengthening curriculum design, institutional readiness, and collaboration with stakeholders to enhance the effectiveness of MBKM in higher education.

INTRODUCTION

The education sector plays a crucial role in improving the quality of human resources, especially in the era of disruption and society 5.0 (Rahayu, 2021). The rapid advancements in technology and the increasing complexity of global issues have created new challenges for educators. Education is a crucial factor for national progress, as good education produces high-quality human resources. In the era of Society 5.0, which emerged in response to the Fourth Industrial Revolution, humans are expected to leverage technology to enhance their abilities and creativity (Ngafifi, 2014). Countries, including Indonesia, are striving to improve their living structures to not be left behind by technological advancements. Indonesia's education system continues to evolve to prepare a generation capable of facing technological challenges.

The era of disruption is characterized by rapid technological advancements, globalization, and the increasing complexity of global issues (Suwardana, 2018). Scholars such as Christensen (2011) have argued that traditional educational models are increasingly inadequate in preparing students for the complexities of the modern world. This era demands a shift towards more flexible, adaptive, and skills-oriented education systems. Society 5.0, introduced by the Japanese government, envisions a society where digital transformation and human-centric solutions coexist to solve societal challenges (Cabinet Office, Government of Japan, 2016). As noted by Fukuyama (2018), the transition to Society 5.0 requires an educational paradigm that emphasizes creativity, critical thinking, and interdisciplinary knowledge.

The problems of economic education in the era of disruption and society 5.0 are multifaceted. They include the need to develop students' skills in areas such as financial literacy, entrepreneurship, and digital literacy (Nastiti & Abdu, 2020). Additionally, there is a growing emphasis on sustainability and environmental awareness, which requires educators to integrate these themes into their curricula.

In Indonesia, the government has implemented the Independent Learning Campus (Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka, MBKM) curriculum to address these challenges. The MBKM curriculum is a revolutionary educational policy introduced by the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture, aiming to provide students with more freedom in learning by emphasizing practical experience and interdisciplinary studies (Arjunaita, 2020). The MBKM initiative aligns with global educational trends that emphasize preparing students for a rapidly evolving job market.

The MBKM curriculum includes various programs such as internships, student exchanges, research, entrepreneurial activities, and community service projects, which are designed to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical skills. Empirical studies on the MBKM curriculum have shown promising results. Research by Widodo and Sari (2021) found that the MBKM curriculum enhances students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Similarly, Rahmawati et al. (2022) reported that students participating in MBKM programs exhibited improved employability and adaptability to the changing job market.

However, studies have also identified several challenges in its implementation, including curriculum adaptation and inter-university collaboration (Dimmera et al., 2023), inadequate infrastructure, limited industry partnerships, and resistance to change among faculty members (Setiawan & Putra, 2021). These findings indicate that while MBKM offers benefits, there are still limitations that need to be addressed.

Although previous studies have demonstrated the potential benefits of the MBKM curriculum, gaps remain in understanding its implementation, particularly in the context of economic education in the era of disruption and Society 5.0. Existing studies tend to focus on general outcomes such as employability and student skills, but have not fully explored how MBKM specifically addresses the unique challenges of economic education, which requires integration of financial literacy, entrepreneurship, and digital competence.

Furthermore, the implementation of MBKM at specific institutions, such as Jambi University, has not been extensively analyzed, especially in relation to curriculum adaptation, student

understanding, and institutional readiness. The Economics Education program at the University of Jambi strives to bridge gaps in the education sector with the vision of producing excellent economics educators. Nevertheless, there are still some obstacles in the implementation of MBKM, such as students' lack of understanding of the policy and challenges in adapting the curriculum.

Based on the identified gap, this study aims to investigate the implementation of the MBKM curriculum in addressing the problems of economic education in the era of disruption and Society 5.0 at Jambi University. Specifically, this study examines its effectiveness and identifies potential solutions to overcome existing obstacles.

This research focuses on the implementation of MBKM in addressing educational economic problems in the era of disruption and Society 5.0 (Tohir, M, 2020), aiming to provide information related to the application of the Merdeka Belajar curriculum at the University of Jambi. The novelty of this research lies in its specific focus on economic education within the MBKM framework and its contextual analysis at Jambi University, which provides deeper insights into both the strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum implementation in a real educational setting.

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative research approach with a descriptive design. Essentially, qualitative studies are used to create descriptions of what is written and said by the sources descriptively regarding the topic of discussion. Hence, the information produced is not numerical but rather in the form of descriptive words. This design is considered suitable for answering the research questions, as it allows an in-depth exploration of the implementation and effectiveness of the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) curriculum in addressing the challenges of economic education in the era of disruption and Society 5.0.

The research was conducted at Jambi University, located at Jl. Lintas Jambi–Ma. Bulian, Muaro Jambi, Jambi, Indonesia. The study took place in April–May 2024, preceded by preliminary observations conducted in September–October 2023. This research was carried out in the Economics Education Study Program, Department of Social Sciences Education, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, University of Jambi. The selection of this location is based on its relevance to the implementation of the MBKM curriculum.

The subjects of this study were students from the 2020 and 2021 cohorts who participated in the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka program activities. In addition, supporting informants included the Secretary of the Social Sciences Education Department, the Head of the Economics Education Study Program, and several lecturers in the Economics Education Study Program. A total of 12 Economics Education students were involved as key informants, while the supporting informants

consisted of the Head of the Study Program, the Secretary of the Department, and three lecturers. This sampling approach is considered appropriate as it involves participants who are directly engaged in the MBKM program implementation.

Data collection techniques included observation, interviews, and documentation. Observations were conducted during both the preliminary and main research phases to obtain an overview of the implementation of the MBKM curriculum. Interviews were carried out with key and supporting informants to gather in-depth information related to the research focus. The researchers also collected supporting data in the form of photos, recordings, and other relevant documents. These instruments allowed the researchers to capture detailed and comprehensive qualitative data regarding the implementation process.

This study has three main focuses: first, the implementation of the MBKM curriculum in addressing the challenges of economics education in the era of disruption and Society 5.0; second, the effectiveness of the MBKM curriculum implementation in dealing with these challenges; and third, solutions for implementing the MBKM curriculum to address the issues of economics education in the era of disruption and Society 5.0. These focuses guide the data collection and analysis procedures in a systematic and meaningful way.

The data obtained were analyzed using Nvivo version 12 software. Researchers used Nvivo version 12 to categorize and manage the interview results systematically. The analysis process involved organizing, coding, and interpreting the qualitative data to identify patterns, themes, and relationships relevant to the research objectives. This approach ensures that the data are processed in a structured manner and provides clear insights into the implementation and effectiveness of the MBKM curriculum.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESULTS

The implementation of the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) curriculum at Jambi University shows promising outcomes in addressing the challenges of economic education in the era of disruption and Society 5.0. The study aimed to understand the implementation, effectiveness, and solutions to the challenges of the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) curriculum in economic education at the University of Jambi. The results are categorized into three main themes: implementation, effectiveness, and solutions.

Implementation of the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka Curriculum in Addressing Economic Education Issues in the Era of Disruption and Society 5.0

Based on the findings presented by researchers through Nvivo data analysis, it was found that the implementation of the Independent Learning Curriculum (Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka) in addressing economic education issues in the era of disruption and Society 5.0 is progressing well, although it is not yet optimal due to the ongoing adaptation process to this new curriculum. With the implementation of the Independent Learning Curriculum (Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka), students are given the freedom to learn outside the classroom, providing opportunities to gain practical experience that can help develop their skills. However, challenges have been encountered in the implementation of this curriculum, including unclear information and difficulties in converting course credits. Additionally, one of the major challenges is the rapid development of information technology, necessitating continuous evaluation to align the current curriculum with contemporary developments.

Researchers then conducted a SWOT analysis to clarify the findings of this study. The SWOT analysis revealed that the implementation of the Independent Learning Curriculum (Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka) in addressing economic education issues in the era of disruption and Society 5.0 has several strengths, including the development of critical, creative, innovative, collaborative, and communicative thinking skills. Moreover, it prepares students to face future challenges in the workforce. The weaknesses of the implementation include unclear information, suboptimal execution, and insufficient collaboration with industry partners. The threats identified include unclear regulations regarding program implementation within the Independent Learning Curriculum (Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka), leading to inconsistencies between universities. The opportunities provided by the implementation include practical experience that allows students to apply their knowledge and skills in real-world settings, encouraging active participation and positive personal development, thereby producing human resources capable of competing with the evolving times.

From the findings of the Nvivo data analysis and SWOT analysis, it can be concluded that the implementation of the Independent Learning Curriculum (Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka) in addressing economic education issues in the era of disruption and Society 5.0 positively impacts the development of student abilities. This is attributed to the program's provision of the right for students to gain practical experience outside their study programs. However, the curriculum also faces challenges, necessitating continuous evaluation to ensure its outcomes effectively meet existing challenges.

Effectiveness of the Implementation of the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka Curriculum in Addressing Economic Education Issues in the Era of Disruption and Society 5.0

Based on the research findings conducted through Nvivo data analysis regarding the effectiveness of the implementation of the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka curriculum, it was found that students gained new experiences that could develop their knowledge and skills such as critical thinking, creativity, innovation, and collaboration. This is expected to produce high-quality human resources, showing a positive response to effectiveness.

In a SWOT analysis conducted by the researcher, it was found that the strength of the effectiveness lies in students being able to explore fields of knowledge and science that encourage them to develop hard and soft skills. However, weaknesses include lack of synchronization in course conversion regulations, misaligned collaboration with partners, insufficient facilities to support digitalization, and student uncertainty when choosing programs. Threats include inadequate infrastructure, internet network issues, insufficient supervision, and rapid technological changes. Opportunities include enhanced knowledge and skills such as creativity and innovation, as indicated by students' participation during the MBKM program.

The results of the Nvivo data analysis and SWOT analysis indicate that the effectiveness of the implementation of the MBKM curriculum helps students to manage and enhance their knowledge and skills positively. However, this effectiveness must be continuously evaluated for optimal future outcomes.

Solutions for the Implementation of the Merdeka Learning Merdeka Campus Curriculum in Addressing Economic Education Issues in the Era of Disruption and Society 5.0

Based on the findings from the Nvivo data analysis, the researcher found solutions including the need to improve course conversion regulations, increase practical courses, add facilities such as digitalization laboratories, train students to write articles, and hold discussions among relevant parties to provide input for a more optimal and relevant future curriculum.

The SWOT analysis shows strengths such as curriculum updates that can advance students and study programs. Weaknesses include limited digitalization facilities and misunderstandings with partners. Threats include rapid changes in civilization and imbalance between independence and guidance. Opportunities include increased student insights, improved quality, and expanded networks beneficial for future careers.

The results highlight the necessity of continuous evaluation to align the curriculum with current developments, ensuring its relevance. The implementation of the MBKM curriculum is expected to produce graduates with insights beyond the classroom and to become agents of change.

DISCUSSION

David Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory defines learning as a process through which knowledge is created via the transformation of experience, derived from the combination of grasping and transforming experience (Apriliyani, 2022). The MBKM program employs experiential learning to actualize students' potential through direct activities aligned with university missions (Culture, 2020).

Aligned with research by Apriliyani et al., the MBKM program enhances experiential learning to develop students' hard and soft skills and improve graduate outcomes, although challenges remain in curriculum adjustments, academic systems, and funding. Similarly, Hasanah and Tobib found that MBKM supports student achievements and prepares them for societal and workforce challenges. The MBKM curriculum also allows students to recognize their potential and apply their skills directly (Aswita, 2022).

Effectiveness is defined as alignment between goals and achieved outcomes (Muchtar, 2023). The MBKM program improves both hard skills (technical competence) and soft skills (interpersonal abilities) (Delita et al., 2016). Studies by Triana et al. and Muchtar et al. confirm that MBKM significantly enhances communication, creativity, teamwork, and post-graduation readiness.

The findings also emphasize the need for continuous curriculum development aligned with MBKM policies (Sopiansyah & Masruroh, 2022). Curriculum preparation must adapt to institutional needs and external collaboration. According to Suwandi (2020), curriculum restructuring must accommodate students' rights to study outside their programs.

Research by Kayati and Kusuma (2023) highlights that MBKM enables students to gain field experience and contribute to society. Meanwhile, Maghfiroh and Sholeh show that MBKM supports the development of creativity, innovation, and resilience required in Society 5.0. Therefore, proper implementation of MBKM can improve the quality of education and produce globally competitive graduates.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussion, it can be concluded that the implementation of the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) curriculum at Jambi University has shown positive contributions in addressing the challenges of economic education in the era of disruption and Society 5.0. The MBKM curriculum provides opportunities for students to gain practical experience outside the classroom, which significantly enhances their critical thinking, creativity, innovation, collaboration, and communication skills. This aligns with the demands of Society 5.0, where education is expected to produce adaptive, competent, and competitive human resources.

In terms of effectiveness, the MBKM curriculum has proven to support the development of both hard skills and soft skills among students. The experiential learning approach embedded in MBKM enables students to better understand real-world problems and apply their knowledge in practical contexts. However, despite these positive outcomes, the implementation of MBKM is not yet fully optimal. Several challenges remain, including unclear information regarding program implementation, difficulties in course credit conversion, limited infrastructure and digital facilities, insufficient collaboration with industry partners, and students' lack of understanding when selecting appropriate programs.

Furthermore, the findings highlight that continuous evaluation and adaptation are essential to ensure the relevance and sustainability of the MBKM curriculum. The rapid development of technology and the dynamic nature of the disruption era require higher education institutions to constantly adjust their curriculum and learning strategies. Without proper evaluation and improvement, the effectiveness of the MBKM program may not fully achieve its intended goals.

Therefore, several recommendations can be proposed. First, universities need to improve the clarity and consistency of regulations related to MBKM implementation, particularly in terms of course conversion and program guidelines, to minimize confusion among students and lecturers. Second, it is important to strengthen collaboration between universities and industry partners to ensure that learning activities are relevant to real-world needs. Third, institutions should enhance supporting facilities, especially in digital infrastructure, to support the implementation of MBKM programs effectively. Fourth, continuous training and socialization should be provided to students and lecturers to improve their understanding and readiness in participating in MBKM activities.

Additionally, curriculum development should be carried out continuously by integrating practical courses, encouraging student participation in research and scientific writing, and facilitating regular discussions among stakeholders to ensure the curriculum remains relevant to current developments. Finally, future research is recommended to explore the implementation of MBKM

in different study programs or institutions using various research approaches, in order to provide broader insights into its effectiveness and impact.

Overall, the MBKM curriculum has strong potential to transform higher education in Indonesia, particularly in economic education, by creating graduates who are not only academically competent but also adaptable, innovative, and ready to face global challenges.

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