

The Policy of *Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM)* In Synergy With Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) To Realize Quality Education On Society 5.0

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Abstract

Fundamentally, Globalization has altered how people work in virtually every facet of life, including higher education. Due to the rigidity of Indonesia's higher education system, the quality of teaching and learning is not optimal. On the other hand, the industrial revolution 4.0 era (digitalization) necessitates the advancement of higher education to meet contemporary challenges. In the education sector, H.E. Mr. Nadiem Makarim initiated *Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM)* with 8 principles that can solve classic problems, namely human resources. This research aims to examine the relationship between *MBKM* and Quality Education to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This research uses a qualitative analysis approach, where the researcher acts as a participant-observer and thus becomes a valid data source in the field. Through *MBKM*, campuses carry out capacity building and the formation of intellectual personal characters by focusing on the quality of human resources. Not only from educators, but campuses also facilitate collaboration in soft skills training with the private sector as well as the formation of competencies that are formally certified legal. In this way, *MBKM* becomes a policy adjustment strategy to produce quality people output according to the Education Quality standards in the SDGs. This achievement is assessed from the competency standards of graduates and how they can behave as a Society 5.0. The importance of applying *MBKM* principles in its implementation in higher education to realize Quality Education with human resources that transforms into a great Society 5.0.

Keywords: *education; industrial revolution 4.0; mbkm; sdgs; society 5.0.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Industrial revolution 4.0 has succeeded in bringing about a change in the way people live and work as a whole. This era is bolstered by current globalization, which is resulting in the widespread application of technological advancements in an increasing number of spheres of life. Specifically, changes are seen in the field of education where the internet is not only used as a communication tool and information seeker but is also used as a place for learning and teaching at all levels of education. Of course, this condition has implications for students to adapt to digital technology (Harahap, 2019).

When we consider the current state of affairs, we see that as more advanced digital technology is accompanied by an increasing user base, the educational system must be able to keep up with the evolution of each phase of life. Education is the most important aspect of life that goes hand in hand with the times. The goal of education as a tool used by humans in the face of increasingly evolving challenges. In this research, we focused on the field of education

which was narrowed to higher education. The next generation of the nation from campuses have personal needs in which they are required to be able to adapt and compete. Unfortunately, not a few students feel burdened by a feudalistic educational culture and academic standardization that are not able to explore their potential optimally (Kompas, 2021). As a result, many graduates are unable to compete competitively in the world of work.

The inability of educational culture and academic standardization to explore potential is a result of the standard curriculum itself and teacher-related issues. Starting from the low quality of lecturers, the feudalistic teaching system, to the quality of lecturer education institutions that need a lot of improvement. Starting from policies, quality of lecturers, curriculum, character education, to culture in teaching and learning activities. This results in the rigidity of the higher education system in Indonesia which makes the quality of teaching and learning not optimal (Kompas, 2020).

A number of these problems then found a solution in which Nadiem Makarim, the Minister of Education and Culture of Republic of Indonesia initiated the *Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM)*. As a leading national education sector, Nadiem Makarim has an important role in realizing the quality of Indonesian human resources through the education sector, following up through this program on October 23rd, 2019. This program will be a direction for future learning that focuses on improving the quality of human resources, as directed by the president and vice president. This is in accordance with the target of Jokowi's second term of government to focus on human resource development as mandated in the fifth Nawacita, to improve the quality of life of Indonesian people (Ministry of Education and Culture of Republic of Indonesia, 2020).

To fully comprehend *MBKM*, it is necessary to understand that the program's foundation is the development of high-quality human resources, which is complemented by the primary content of *Merdeka Belajar*. Having superior human resources is critical and provides a solution to Indonesia's current problems. It is also believed that the quality of human resources is the intellectual capital that has competitive and comparative advantages, and also ready to face the digitalization era which marks the era of affirmation of the emergence of the creative and innovative century. Another obstacle comes in the form of symptoms of the nation's children's mental health deteriorating as a result of the rise of information nodes from social media (Lubis, 2018).

In implementing *MBKM*, the campus applies 8 principles that emphasize the quality of human resources from graduates through other study experiences and social activities in the community. With the 8 principles, *MBKM* tries to determine the output of the program by standardizing quality education. Quality education will be a reference for quality standards of education to be applied in a country so that the education system becomes better and more sustainable (Sustainable Development Goals point 4). The purpose of this research is to examine the relationship between *MBKM* and Quality Education in order to contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The researchers examine how the concept of the *Kampus Merdeka* evolved during the industrial revolution 4.0 is a condition that students will face, as well as the reason why students require the *Kampus Merdeka* concept to effect positive change. Implementation of the *Kampus Merdeka* concept to strengthen a higher education system that is capable of meeting the demands of the current day is a major question.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

In 2015, international leaders, including Indonesia's president, agreed on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are a global action plan for eradicating poverty, reducing inequality, and protecting the environment. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are made of 17 Goals and 169 Targets that must be achieved by 2030. Among these 17 goals, the education sector is included in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), also known as SDGs 04, which require countries to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education for all, as well as support opportunities for lifelong learning for all (SDGs, 2021).

These objectives address increasing poor people's incomes, ensuring access to basic services, and safeguarding the entire community against disasters of all kinds. Education enables socioeconomic mobility and is critical for escaping poverty. Over the last decade, significant

progress has been made in expanding educational access and enrollment rates at all levels, particularly for girls. Nonetheless, approximately 260 million children — nearly a fifth of the global population in that age group — remained out of school in 2018. Additionally, more than half of children and adolescents worldwide do not meet minimum reading and math proficiency standards (United Nations, 2021).

In particular, the Global Education Coalition aims to:

1. Assist countries in mobilizing resources and implementing innovative and context-appropriate solutions to provide education at a distance, leveraging high-tech, low-tech and no-technology approaches.
2. Seek fair solutions and universal access.
3. Ensure coordinated responses and avoid overlapping efforts.
4. Facilitate the return of students to school when they reopen to avoid an increase in dropout rates (Bappenas, 2021).

Additionally, progress has been hampered in some developing areas by high poverty rates, armed conflict, and other emergencies. The ongoing armed conflict in West Asia and North Africa has resulted in an increase in the number of out-of-school children. This is a very concerning trend. Children from the poorest households are four times more likely than children from the richest households to drop out of school. The disparity between rural and urban areas continues to be substantial (United Nations, 2021).

Achieving universal access to a high-quality education reaffirms the belief that education is one of the most effective and proven mechanisms for achieving sustainable development. By 2030, this goal ensures that all girls and boys receive free primary and secondary education. Additionally, it seeks to ensure equal access to affordable vocational training, to eliminate gender and wealth disparities, and to ensure universal access to high-quality affordable higher education (UNDP, 2021). Continuity in practice is necessary for revolutionizing education. As a result, a new direction for education in Indonesia is required through a paradigm shift in education.

Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM)

Kampus Merdeka is an extension of the *Merdeka Belajar* program that continues to be discussed in the education environment. The creation of the concept of the *Merdeka Belajar* campus was initiated because the government highlighted its function in educational reform. *Kampus Merdeka* frees students to take advantage of three semesters. Within a period of three semesters, students are free to seek learning experiences that are not related to the majors taken at that time. Not only that but students are also asked to seek as many social experiences as possible that are specifically relevant to technology. These three semesters are carried out outside the study program so that they can produce superior human resources when they graduate from college. In other words, they will act as the biggest change agents in the progress of civilization (Siregar et al., 2020).

Theoretically, *Merdeka Belajar* is also studied based on the terminology of the word “*merdeka*” and the concept of “*Belajar*” itself. According to *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (KBBI)*, the semantic “*merdeka*” has three meanings:

1. Freedom (from inhibition, colonialism, and so on), independent.
2. Not affected or exempt from prosecution.
3. Not bound, not dependent on certain people or parties (Yamin & Syahrir, 2020).

The concept of “*Belajar*” according to Sagala (2006), can be understood as an effort or practice in order to gain intelligence. Meanwhile, Sudjana (2013) argues that learning is not just an activity of memorizing and remembering. Learning activities include:

1. A process marked by a change in a person's self, which can be shown such as changing his knowledge, understanding, attitudes, and behavior, skills, abilities and abilities, reaction power, acceptance power, and other aspects that exist in individuals.
2. Active process, the process of doing through various experiences.
3. The process of reacting to all situations that exist around the individual.
4. A goal-directed process.
5. The process of seeing, observing, understanding something.

There are 8 points for *Kampus Merdeka* activities, including:

1. Student Exchange
2. Internship/Work Practice
3. Teaching Assistance in Education Units
4. Research/Research
5. Humanitarian Project
6. Entrepreneurial Activities
7. Independent Study/Project
8. Building a Thematic Real Work Village/Lecture (Directorate General of Higher Education, Ministry of Education and Culture, 2020)

In addition, Directorate General of Higher Education, Ministry of Education and Culture of Republic of Indonesia mention that there are also key government policies regarding *Merdeka Belajar* campuses as the latest breakthroughs, such as:

1. Opening of new study programs with current policy directions:
 - a. Campuses with A and B accreditation have the authority to open new majors if they have a partner.
 - b. The new major will automatically get a C accreditation.
 - c. Collaboration includes curriculum development, work practices, and work placements. In this case, the Ministry of Education and Culture acts as a supervisor.
 - d. Study tracer must be done every year.
2. Higher education accreditation system with policy directions:
 - a. The validity period of the accreditation is 5 years, it will be renewed automatically. The period for applying for an increase in accreditation is at any time voluntarily.
 - b. If there are indications of a decrease in quality as evidenced by public complaints and a decrease in the number of registrants within a period of five consecutive years, the accreditation will be reviewed.
 - c. Maximum 2 years for re-accreditation application.
3. State campuses are legal entities.
4. The right to study three semesters outside the study program has important points, including:
 - a. Students are given the right to take or not voluntarily.
 - b. Can take credits outside the campus for 2 semesters (equivalent to 40 credits).
 - c. Can take credits in different study programs at the same campus for 1 semester (equivalent to 20 credits).
 - d. The credits that must be taken in the original study program are 5 semesters of the total semester that must be carried out (not valid for health study programs).

This concept is also based on the argument that the Indonesian higher education system which only focuses on one study program is not good. The reasons are: 1) many students feel that they do not fit into their study program and cannot find their identity; 2) the skills needed for the profession ultimately require the individual to learn again in the profession itself because the working conditions are different from what is learned in class. The concept of *Merdeka Belajar* highlights several points, including:

1. This concept is the answer to the classic problem of educators in educational practice.
2. There is a reduction in the burden of the profession through the flexibility to carry out various types and forms of assessment indicators on the learning process of students and freedom from complicated administration and various pressures to intimidate, criminalize, or politicize educator (Kusumaryono, 2020).

Merdeka Belajar is a proposal for the reconstruction of the national education system. Reorganization of the educational system in order to accommodate the nation's changes and progress toward becoming more adaptable to changing times. By reintroducing the essence of true education, namely education that serves to humanize or liberate humans. According to the *Merdeka Belajar* concept, lecturers and students are both subjects in the educational system. This means that students do not view the lecturer as a source of truth, but rather that lecturers and students work together to move and seek the truth. This means that the lecturer's role in the classroom is not to plant or uniform the lecturer's version of truth, but to investigate the truth, students' reasoning abilities, and critical perspectives on the world and phenomena.

Merdeka Belajar is gaining momentum as a result of the opportunity for internet and technology development. Because it is capable of infiltrating a repressive or non-liberating educational system. This includes reforming the workload of lecturers and schools, which are too devoted to administrative matters. Therefore, the freedom to innovate, learn independently, and be creative can be carried out by education units, lecturers, and students (Siregar et al., 2020).

3. RESEARCH METHODS/METHODOLOGY

This research uses a qualitative analysis approach, where the researcher acts as a participant-observer and thus becomes a valid data source in the field. The method used in this research is non-research, such as library research, by collecting information from several sources, they are books, journals, the internet, and information in the form of opinions expressed by the minister of education through several events that the researchers quoted from online news media with the aim of obtaining deeper information and provide analysis related to the concept of the *Merdeka Belajar* campus in the era of the industrial revolution 4.0. (Sugiyono, 2008).

The data analysis technique used is Discourse Analysis, which analyzes the discourses or communication between people in a certain social context. The fields studied in discourse analysis are in the form of speech, writing, language, conversation (both verbal and nonverbal), and so on. The stages are: 1) determining the main topic of a specific discourse; 2) reviewing discursive strategies (including argumentation strategies); and 3) analyzing real meanings in language, as well as linguistic meanings in other forms (Darma, 2009).

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

It is impossible to avoid the rapid development of information and technology. This is a critical component of both education and learning. Lecturers are critical to the smooth operation of education. It is capable of balancing the educational system with available technology. Thus, lecturers can transform learning from the traditional to the contemporary (Siregar et al., 2020). Combining learning methods with technology teaches students that education and technology must coexist and that learning activities can be created in any situation. Therefore, the learning revolution in Indonesia is a must, which is implemented through the *Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM)*.

Regarding the *MBKM* concept in the Industrial Revolution 4.0 era, *Kampus Merdeka* focuses on human resources as a goal to be achieved (Ministry of Education and Culture of Republic of Indonesia, 2020). The existence of the 8 principles of *MBKM* which are summarized in *MBKM*, has shown great concern for campuses in Indonesia where the existence of campuses is intended to produce intelligent Indonesian generations so that they can face the challenges that continue to change. Through *MBKM*, students are prepared to face all possibilities that will occur in the workplace and in the community. *MBKM* provides students with a wider learning experience, for example by applying more challenging and student-centered learning strategies and methods. For example, discussion methods and problem-based learning strategies will prepare students to be responsive to community conditions and will be complemented by field experiences such as internships, work on village projects, and social services.

The concept initiated by the Minister of Education, Mr. Nadiem Makarim, is a form of effort for the advancement of Indonesian education, especially at the campus level in the face of the Industrial Revolution 4.0 era. This period, in which technology has been interwoven in daily life, is also referred to as the era of disruption, as indicated by various indications such as easier, cheaper, more affordable, and faster in a range of disciplines, as well as the emergence of new technologies (Widaningsih, 2019). Furthermore, with the demands of changing needs, there is an assumption that there will be a loss of types of jobs because there are no consumers and jobs can be replaced by technology, but there may also be new types of jobs, which are needed so that it will increase employment opportunities. From this explanation, students as prospective workers, have significant hurdles ahead of them as they enter the Fourth Industrial Revolution. In this case, we identify a notion, namely *Merdeka Belajar*, which was launched by Minister Mr. Nadiem Makarim and which we believe is appropriate.

Campuses create an educational ecosystem that fosters the growth and development of reason, character, innovation, independence, comfort, and student expertise during the

learning process. Thus, *MBKM* can develop superior or superior-quality resources to close educational gaps in the Industrial 4.0 era with the goal of advancing the nation and state.. From this description, students as prospective workers as well as human resources who will enter the community environment will be challenged to face the era of the Industrial Revolution 4.0 (Siregar et al., 2020). In other words, campuses carry out capacity building and the formation of intellectual personal characters by focusing on the quality of human resources.

Campuses carry out *MBKM* in order to improve the education curriculum which is considered not optimal in exploring the potential of its students. By adhering to the 8 principles, campuses are required to take strategic steps to support and facilitate *MBKM*:

1. Cooperation with the private sector (soft skills).

Considering that the application of *MBKM* activities is interesting, the impact of which is very quickly felt on the development of student skills. To support students learning passion, campuses collaborate with the private sector in presenting different experiences, both in knowledge and social experience. Students will feel the difference when they enter the community by only studying in class, especially if what they encounter is something new. They will find a thirst for continuous learning and fall in love with the learning process. Private sector actors include companies that are active in the interaction of the market system, such as manufacturing, trade, banking, and cooperatives, as well as informal sector activities. Higher education involves the private sector because it plays a role in the pattern of governance and development, as well as an opportunity to improve productivity, employment, source of income, public investment, business development, and economic growth. There will be an adjustment of soft skills and student potential with the needs of human resources in the private sector (Al Azhar et al., 2020).

2. Competence and certification (legal formal).

To produce graduates who are able to face the challenges of the industrial revolution era, a collaboration of various soft skills is needed through development and training/guidance. Campuses are not enough to apply the old literacy (reading, writing, arithmetic) which is done in the classroom environment but must implement new literacy (data literacy, technological literacy, and human resource literacy or humanism) which is proven legally and formally. Through formal law, the competencies possessed by graduates have been certified so that they receive recognition in the work environment. The existence of competency and certification facilities is a process of granting competency certificates through competency tests in accordance with Indonesian national work competency standards, international standards, and/or special standards. By focusing on standards, students are assessed as outputs who have intellectual, emotional intelligence and the ability to adapt to digitalization that strengthens 21st-century literacy skills. Starting from creative, critical thinking, communicative, and collaborative aspects that are sustainable.

Measurement of graduate competency achievement refers to the competency standards of *MBKM* graduates. In light of the challenges presented by the Industrial Revolution 4.0 era, in which there are transformational steps toward improvement through the integration of the online world and production lines in industry, and in which all production processes are supported by the internet, achievement is measured by graduates' competency standards and their ability to behave as a Society 5.0 capable of resolving various challenges and social problems through utmost creativity and innovation.

CONCLUSION

From the description of the discussion above, the researcher concludes that *MBKM* is a policy adjustment strategy to produce quality human output according to the Education Quality standards in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The importance of implementing *MBKM* principles in its implementation in campuses to realize Quality Education with human resources that transforms into a Greater Society 5.0. Researchers also consider that the concept of *Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM)* seeks to answer challenges in the era of industrial revolution 4.0.

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