Implementation of ‘Freedom to Learn, Independent Campus’ (MBKM) Policy

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ABSTRACT

The ‘Freedom to Learn, Independent Campus’ or MBKM program is a flagship program that aims to create competitive, skilled, independent, and innovative students. This study aims to determine the implementation of the MBKM program in the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, one of the universities in Central Sulawesi Province. This study used a quantitative approach. The population was the study program and MBKM units consisting of the faculty, lecturers, and students, with a total of 111 respondents. The sampling used a purposive sampling technique to determine the criteria. The number of samples used a census to sample the entire population. Data were collected by observation, questionnaires, and documentation. Then, data were analyzed using descriptive statistics guided by the mean value. The results of the study showed that the implementation of MBKM has not been effective in terms of communication, resources, and the attitude of the implementers, especially in the dimension of resources for the indicators of human resources and supporting facilities which are important to be considered in the implementation of MBKM program. Meanwhile, the dimensions of the bureaucratic structure have been effective as the standard operating procedures have been provided in the form of guidelines or implementation guidebooks. Furthermore, the responsibilities or authorities in implementing policies and the path of coordination have been well distributed.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The implementation of Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM), which means “freedom to learn, independent campus” policy at universities, is essential (Asia 2021) as it has been the key program of the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia (Kodrat 2021). MBKM’s policy leads to more appropriate and flexible that can encourage students’ abilities to suit the community’s needs.
and be ready to face the world of work by giving campuses the freedom to manage their higher education institutions. The MBKM policy aims to create competitive graduates (Nona et al. 2022; Puspitasari and Nugroho 2021) and develop innovative and independent human resources (HR) in seeking and finding knowledge and experience (Asia, 2021).

Higher education in Indonesia has not all been considered capable of producing graduates ready to work and have the abilities and skills according to the demands of the world of work (Puspitasari and Nugroho 2021). The MBKM policy is the first step for universities to create qualified students in the fields of science and technology who have character and meet the challenges of the world of work. The MBKM policy is expected to be able to address the problems of education and employment in Indonesia. Through close interactions between universities and the world of work and off-campus activities that broaden students’ knowledge and experiences, students are expected to have added value and be able to compete in facing future challenges. Meanwhile, Puspitasari and Nugroho (2021) reveal that the implementation of the MBKM policy is not in accordance with its objectives as in practice, there is a quota limitation on student exchange programs and prerequisites and selections for activities outside the study program so that not all students can improve their competencies according to the expectation of the policy. These results indicate that the implementation of the MBKM policy has not met the expectations of the actors involved.

The implementation of the MBKM policy faced some problems due to various factors, one of which was a large number of programs and activities that had to be carried out quickly. In contrast, the study programs and faculties had not been ready. Besides, each university in Indonesia has a different interpretation of understanding the MBKM policy, so it is difficult to equate perceptions in establishing collaboration between universities (Puspitasari and Nugroho, 2021). Thus, the implementation of MBKM has not been effective yet.

Public policy is highly determined by its implementation, so, in the process, implementation becomes important (Hermawan, Septian, and Hayat 2022). In implementing the MBKM policy, an ideal process is needed to achieve the desired goals. Therefore, adequate facilities and infrastructure resources are needed in the implementation process. Nona et al. (2022) reveal that the readiness of human resources, in this case, lecturers, is vital in the implementation of MBKM. Besides, the need for the application of technology is important, especially internet access, as without it, it will be to implement the MBKM (Puspitasari and Nugroho 2021). Considering the problems that occurred in previous research, the implementation of the MBKM policy at the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences also experienced the same problems. This faculty faced problems with the readiness of facilities and infrastructure, implementation time, resource readiness, and understanding of MBKM. Other universities still share the same problems.

Those problems indicate that communication, resources, and the attitude of the implementer are still problematic. Meanwhile, the structural problem has been explained in the form of the MBKM guidebook. Concerning policy implementation, the problems were studied based on the theory or implementation model developed by Edward III (1980). Edward III’s (1980) policy implementation model consists of communication, resources, the attitude of implementers, and bureaucratic structure. The model is considered effective in answering the research questions about the implementation of the MBKM program as some of the problems concern the implementer’s understanding of communication, resources, and willingness showed by their attitude in implementing MBKM. Therefore, this study aims to determine the extent to which the MBKM policy is implemented. The results of this study are expected to contribute to the development of universities in Indonesia, especially in implementing the MBKM policy.

2. METHODS

This study used a quantitative approach. The results of this approach are identical to the numerical data (Gerrish and Lacey 2010). The population of this research was all elements involved in implementing the MBKM policy at the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, covering the study
programs and units of MBKM, such as the faculty, lecturers, and students. The sampling technique used a purposive technique to determine the criteria and a census technique to determine the number of samples. The criteria were based on the consideration that the samples were involved in the implementation of MBKM.

The sample was determined using a purposive sampling technique, considering that all of the samples were involved in the implementation of the MBKM policy. The samples were Study Program Coordinators, 10 people from MBKM Faculty, 25 lecturers (Sociology, Anthropology, Public Administration Science, Government Science, and Communication Study Programs), and 75 students who participated in the student exchange program. Thus, the total sample size was 111 respondents. Data were collected by observation, questionnaires, and documentation. Observations were carried out to see phenomena in the field related to the implementation of MBKM concerning communication, resources, the attitude of implementers, and the bureaucratic structure. This research questionnaire was developed based on the theory or implementation model by Edward III (1980), which has several dimensions, and each dimension has some indicators as the basis for formulating the questions.

The questionnaire used a Likert Scale. The study used both primary and secondary data. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics guided by the mean value. The mean value was obtained using the following formula:

$$\text{Interval} = \frac{\text{Highest value} - \text{Lowest value}}{\text{Number of interval classes}} = \frac{5 - 1}{5} = 0.8$$  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Mean Values</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very high</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.20 – 5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.40 – 4.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.60 – 3.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.80 – 2.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very low</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.00 – 1.79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study aims to identify the implementation of the MBKM program. This study aims to determine the MBKM policy aims to guard the transformation of higher education. This policy is stated in the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia Number 3 of 2020 concerning National Higher Education Standards. Through this policy, campuses are encouraged to be flexible in collaborating with the business world, industry, and public. The MBKM policy provides challenges and opportunities to develop students’ creativity, capacity, personality, and needs as well as independence in seeking and finding knowledge through realities and field dynamics such as skill requirements, social interaction, collaboration, self-management, performance demands, targets and their application (Sulistiyani et al. 2022).

This study tries to answer the problem of implementing the MBKM policy in the faculty of Social and Political Sciences, one of the universities in Central Sulawesi Province. The results showed that the implementation of the MBKM policy was measured by communication, resources, the attitude of implementers, and the bureaucratic structure. Descriptive results are presented in Table 2.
### Table 2. Descriptive statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Cumulative mean</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Transmission</td>
<td>Q01</td>
<td>Information from the Ministry of Education and Culture has been conveyed to implementers, related parties, and target groups</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>4.9730</td>
<td>Very high</td>
<td>4.05</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Clarity</td>
<td>Q02</td>
<td>Instructions for implementing the MBKM policy are not only accepted by policy implementers but also must be clear and easy to understand to avoid misinterpretation</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>4.0991</td>
<td>Very high</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Consistency</td>
<td>Q03</td>
<td>Information about the MBKM policy is consistent and clear</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>3.0811</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>Human resources</td>
<td>Q04</td>
<td>HR of the MBKM policy implementers are qualified and supported by quality</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>3.0811</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>3.37</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Budget</td>
<td>Q05</td>
<td>The planned budgeting in the implementation of the MBKM policy is guaranteed</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>4.0450</td>
<td>High</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Facility</td>
<td>Q06</td>
<td>Facilities and infrastructure supporting the MBKM policy are sufficient</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>3.0000</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Attitudes of implementers</td>
<td>Supporting</td>
<td>Q07</td>
<td>Implementers at the university support the</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>4.9550</td>
<td>Very high</td>
<td>3.95</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2 shows that the MBKM has been implemented, but the results of descriptive statistics cumulatively show various mean values. This means that the respondents' responses also varied to the implementation of MBKM at the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences. The diversity is seen from the cumulative mean value criteria, which shows that the respondents' responses cover very high, high, and medium criteria. This indicates that MBKM has been implemented but has not been fully implemented effectively.

Based on Table 2, the implementation of MBKM has not been effective, especially related to the resource dimension. This dimension received a moderate response. It means that resources are an inhibiting factor for the successful implementation of MBKM in the faculty of Social and Political Sciences one of the universities in Central Sulawesi Province. The intended resource was human resources (HR) and infrastructure, which received a moderate response, while budgeting received a high response. The observations showed that limited human resources and poor internet access become obstacles.

Based on the study results, policy implementers must pay attention to various factors that obstruct the implementation of MBKM. The MBKM policy has been equipped with guidelines that all universities must follow in Indonesia. These guidelines serve as the basis for universities to prepare all elements to encourage the success of MBKM, for example, preparing quality human resources and adequate facilities and infrastructure to support the implementation of the MBKM policy. Nona et al. (2022) reveal that resources are an important factor in the implementation of MBKM. On the other hand, Puspitasari and Nugroho (2021) show the success of MBKM is determined by means such as internet access. The success of MBKM implementation is determined by the implementation process. According to Hermawan et al. (2022), the implementation process is important in public policy. It means that
public policies, including the MBKM policy, must be implemented to determine the inhibiting and supporting factors.

The MBKM policy is relatively new, but universities are required to adapt quickly to implement it. The implementation of a policy, including the MBKM policy, requires high adaptability from the implementers and targets (Rochana, Darajatun, and Ramdhany, 2021). The intended adaptation is that the implementers and policy targets need to respond positively to the policy so that it can be implemented seriously and with high responsibility.

The implementation of the MBKM policy by the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences faces some problems. Besides the problem of resources, it faces problems of communication and attitude of the implementers. MBKM communication is vital to equalize the perception of the head of the faculty, lecturers, and students. Furthermore, Anggakarti et al. (2022) reveal that socialization is a problem in the implementation of MBKM. This means that the communication problem is not only faced by the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences but also by other universities. This indicates that communication is vital for the successful implementation of the MBKM policy. In terms of communication, socialization has to be carried out clearly and consistently so that implementers and policy targets have the same understanding of the program. Indeed, the COVID-19 pandemic hinders MBKM’s communication, but technological advances can be a solution for the implementation of socialization. The implementation of compulsory socialization both online and offline by universities is preferred by students to find out about all MBKM programs and policies so that they can prepare themselves well to take part in this program (May, Naja, and Kusi 2022). One of the variables supporting the success of policy implementation is effective communication (Rizky et al., 2021). Lecturers have not yet understood their position and role due to the lack of information received regarding MBKM policies (Mony, Lusianawati, and Leonardi, 2021). This shows that communication needs to be channelled, clear, and consistent. The results of this study are in line with the dimensions of communication developed by Edward III (1980).

Besides communication, the attitude of the implementer also needs to be considered as the results of this study indicate that the dimension of the attitude of the implementer is in high criteria. This is still lower compared to the dimension of the bureaucratic structure. It means that the results of this study indicate that the dimensions of the bureaucratic structure strongly support the implementation of MBKM. Meanwhile, the dimension of the attitude of the implementer has a lower mean value, so it still needs to be considered. The attitude of the implementer is important as support, refusal, and commitment are indicators of the success of the program being carried out. The MBKM is one of the important policies in the development of universities, including the faculties, lecturers, and students. MBKM creates graduates to become leaders and has character (Fuadi and Irdalisa 2021; Hapsari and Yunus 2021). This policy aims to encourage students to master various fields of science according to their fields of expertise so that they are ready to compete in the global world (Adine 2020; Ardini et al. 2021; Baharuddin 2021; Direktorat Jenderal Pendidikan Tinggi Kemdikbud RI and Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan 2020; Fatmawati 2021; Sintiawati et al. 2022; Suwandi 2020; Tohir 2020). This policy provides an opportunity for students to choose the courses based on their wants.

The Independent Campus is a form of learning in higher education that is autonomous and flexible to create a learning culture that is innovative, non-restrain, and in accordance with student needs (Suwandi 2020). The main MBKM program is the ease of opening new research programs, improvement of the higher education accreditation scheme, the ease of official state universities becoming integrated state universities, and the freedom of students to study outside the study program for three semesters. Students are given the freedom to take lectures outside the curriculum, namely one semester to take lectures outside the curriculum and two semesters to carry out study activities outside the university. It is expected that the MBKM policy can provide opportunities for students to contextually gain off-campus experiences that can strengthen their abilities as a whole, be ready to work or build new careers.
The MBKM policy prioritizes active learning by developing creativity and innovation and being critical in problem-solving in the learning process (Baharuddin 2021). The implementation of MBKM has been proven to positively impact students’ learning, students’ hard and soft skills, graduate learning outcomes, and the capacity of the lecturers (Hapsari and Yunus 2021). Implementing the MBKM policy has been proven to significantly affect (87%) the improvement of students’ hard and soft skills (Pangruruk et al. 2022).

The implementation of quality education requires the availability of a good curriculum. A good curriculum can direct and be a reference for educators in designing and implementing learning. Therefore, curriculum development needs to be carried out carefully with appropriate procedures, based on a number of foundations, and consider the needs of the user community and the development of science and technology. The curriculum has a strategic role, but the understanding of educational stakeholders about the curriculum and its development is diverse, especially the development of the MBKM curriculum, which is still new (Suwandi 2020). This shows that curriculum is important to create graduates.

Considering the importance of implementing MBKM in universities, it is necessary for implementers to pay attention to factors supporting the success of the policy implementation. Implementing MBKM requires support from various parties, including universities, faculties, students, government, and partners. Concerning this study, the implementation of MBKM requires the dimensions of communication, resources, the attitude of implementers, and bureaucratic structure as several research results show that these dimensions are important for the implementation of MBKM. In terms of communication, good communication channels are needed to build effective communication so that the instructions or contents of the policy can be correctly transmitted (Rizky et al., 2021). Sintiauwati et al. (2022) reveal problems in the implementation of MBKM, such as the problem of insufficient budget, lack of academic information and MBKM information, and limited human resources. The results of other studies also show that the implementation of MBKM requires adequate education personnel to support the program’s development (Ardini et al., 2021).

Considering the results of the previous studies, the successful implementation of MBKM needs support from various parties. The implementation of the MBKM policy needs support and cooperation from various parties (Susetyo 2020). This policy needs to be guarded continuously so that it can be implemented as expected. The implementation needs sincerity, hard work, and creativity so that the policy can be realized as ideally as possible (Muhajir 2021). The MBKM policy is expected to be the answer to the demands of the link and match with industry, the world of work, research, and the needs of villages, sub-districts, districts/cities, provinces, countries, and the world. The Independent Campus is a form of learning in higher education that is autonomous and flexible to create a learning culture that is innovative, non-restrain, and in accordance with students’ needs (Susetyo 2020). Overall, this study provides important information for universities in implementing MBKM, including developing students’ abilities, independence, creativity, innovation, and experiences.

4. CONCLUSION

The implementation of MBKM is important as it can encourage capacity building for all elements of education, including students. The implementation of MBKM in the faculty of Social and Political Sciences, one of the universities in Central Sulawesi Province, has not been effective. Based on Edward III’s (1980) policy implementation model, all dimensions must be interrelated MBKM implementation is effective. The results of the study indicate that some dimensions have not worked effectively, for example, communication, resources, and attitudes of implementers. The dimension of resources, especially on indicators of human resources and supporting facilities, is important to be considered in the implementation of MBKM. Meanwhile, the dimensions of the bureaucratic structure have been very effective because, in the implementation of MBKM, standard operating procedures have been provided in the form of guidelines or implementation guidebooks, and the responsibilities or authorities in implementing policies as well as the path of coordination have been well distributed. Based on the study
results, the researcher provides recommendations for further studies focusing on the implementation of MBKM to focus more on MBKM communication or socialization, human resources, and attitude of implementers as these dimensions have not been effective. Besides, the results of this study can also be a reference for universities to implement MBKM more effectively.

REFERENCES


