

## **The Role of the Independent Campus Learning Program in Improving Quality of Higher Education Graduates**

**Iwan Asmadi**

[Iwan.iad@bsi.ac.id](mailto:Iwan.iad@bsi.ac.id)

**Zahra**

[Zahra.zzr@bsi.ac.id](mailto:Zahra.zzr@bsi.ac.id)

**Eneng Iviq Hairo Rahayu**

[Eneng.eor@bsi.ac.id](mailto:Eneng.eor@bsi.ac.id)

**Saddam Hussaen**

[Saddam.sen@bsi.ac.id](mailto:Saddam.sen@bsi.ac.id)

**Universitas Bina Sarana Informatika**

### **ABSTRACT**

The Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) program launched by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia is one of the breakthroughs in the Era of Digitalization in the field of Education, in order to prepare students to face social changes, culture, the world of work and rapid technological advances, student competencies must be prepared to be more in line with the needs of the times. Link and match not only with industry and the world of work but also with a rapidly changing future. Higher Education is required to be able to design and implement innovative learning processes so that students can achieve learning outcomes covering aspects of attitudes, knowledge, and skills optimally and always relevant.

**Keywords:** MBKM; Digital Era; Quality of Graduates

### **INTRODUCTION**

The development of science is currently growing and developing so quickly. Which has an impact on various sectors of human life. In the industrial era 4.0 or digitalization era, technology is currently considered the most important entity and has a major influence on science in the world. Heidegger stated that technology is not just a tool or object, but a way of seeing and being human. This era emphasizes the use of technology for social progress and human welfare. Therefore, education in the industrial era 4.0 must be able to prepare a generation that is ready to face future challenges that are increasingly complex and diverse, such as; internet of things in education (IoT), Virtual Augmented Reality in the world of education, use of artificial intelligence (AI).

The rapid development of science and technology has brought about many very rapid changes in various aspects of life, work and the way we work have changed,

many jobs have disappeared, and various new types of work have emerged. Economic, social and cultural changes are also occurring at a high rate. In these very dynamic times, universities must respond quickly and precisely. Learning transformation is needed to be able to equip and prepare higher education graduates to become a superior generation. A generation that is responsive and ready to face the challenges of its time, without being uprooted from the cultural roots of its nation.

Currently, creativity and innovation are important keywords to ensure Indonesia's sustainable development. Students who are currently studying at universities must be prepared to become true learners who are skilled, flexible and tenacious (agile learners). The Independent Learning – Independent Campus policy launched by the Minister of Education and Culture is a framework for preparing students to become strong graduates, relevant to the needs of the times, and ready to become leaders with a high national spirit. We need leaders who can understand the needs between the world of industry and the world of education and are able to create educational patterns that suit the needs of the times.(Asmadi, Abdur, et al., 2022). To produce superior Indonesian people, a development policy direction is needed that prioritizes education as an investment in the future(Rashid, 2015). There are three reasons to prioritize education as a long-term investment. First, education is a tool for economic development and not just economic growth. Modern education management says that one of the five functions of education is a technical-economic function both at the individual level and at the global level. The technical-economic function refers to the contribution of education to economic development. For example, education can help students to gain the knowledge and skills necessary to live and compete in a competitive economy(Yanuarsari et al., 2021).

As is known, the era of digitalization and globalization is an era of competition for the quality of a product. A quality product will be in demand by consumers, conversely if the product is not of good quality it will be abandoned by consumers. Likewise, universities in the era of globalization must be based on quality(Asmadi et al., 2023). Universities must increasingly focus on improving the quality of educational service activities and developing human resources that have advantages. Students as prospective graduates who are currently studying at universities actually expect results, namely knowledge, degrees, skills, experience, beliefs and noble behavior that are able to compete in the global market and can benefit from technology. All of this is necessary as preparation for entering the world of work and/or preparation for opening employment opportunities with the hope of a better life and prosperity as well.(Arifin, 2021).

National education functions to develop abilities and shape the character and civilization of a dignified nation in order to make the nation's life more intelligent, aimed at developing the potential of students to become human beings who have faith and are devoted to God Almighty, have noble character, are healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent, and become democratic and responsible citizens.(Law of the Republic of Indonesia No. 20 of 2003 concerning

the National Education System, 2004). Seeing that economic, social and cultural changes continue to move rapidly, universities must be responsive in responding to this and carry out learning transformations to equip and prepare graduates who are superior, competent, cultured and able to face the challenges of the times. This is in line with opinion(Siregar et al., 2020) which said looking at the current situation, where times have increasingly changed with the flow of globalization, and increasingly high technological advances. Education cannot be outdated. Education must go hand in hand with every phase of life that continues to change, one of which is the education system which is undergoing changes for the better, to meet human needs in facing the challenges of an ever-changing era.

The concept of an independent campus that was initiated by the Minister of Education and Culture, namely Mr. Nadiem Makarim, and what are the problems of students today that require a change in the concept of higher education for the better. remembering in this case, the era of industrial revolution 4.0 is an era where technology is increasingly advanced, so that in this case students from each tertiary institution are expected to be ready to face the challenges in the era of industrial revolution 4.0, with the concept of an independent campus they are directed to be more ready to work , work together, be creative and can be useful for themselves and other communities(Rodiyah, 2021). Independent Learning – Independent Campus, is the policy of the Minister of Education and Culture, which aims to encourage students to master various knowledge that is useful for entering the world of work. Independent Campus provides the opportunity for students to choose the courses they will take.

The Independent Learning Policy - Independent Campus is in accordance with Minister of Education and Culture Regulation Number 3 of 2020 concerning National Higher Education Standards, in Article 18 it is stated that fulfilling the study period and load for undergraduate or applied undergraduate students can be carried out: 1) following the entire learning process in the study program in universities according to study period and load; and 2) following the learning process within the study program to fulfill part of the study period and load and the remainder following the learning process outside the study program. Through Merdeka Belajar – Merdeka Campus, students have the opportunity for 1) semester or the equivalent of 20 (twenty) credits to study outside the study program at the same university; and a maximum of 2 (two) semesters or the equivalent of 40 (forty) credits studying the same study program at a different university, studying at a different study program at a different university; and/or learning outside of higher education. Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka is designed to prepare students to face social, cultural changes, the world of work and rapid technological advances, student competencies must be prepared to be more connected with the needs of the times. Link and match not only with the world of industry and the world of work but also with a rapidly changing future. Higher education institutions are required to be able to design and implement innovative learning processes so that students can achieve learning outcomes including aspects of attitudes, knowledge and skills optimally and always relevant. In order for this independent campus independent

learning program to run, support from all parties is needed, especially university leaders, who open up opportunities and encourage students and lecturers to be able to carry out this program so that the quality of university graduates can compete internationally. and skills optimally and always relevant. In order for this independent campus independent learning program to run, support from all parties is needed, especially university leaders, who open up opportunities and encourage students and lecturers to be able to carry out this program so that the quality of university graduates can compete internationally. and skills optimally and always relevant. In order for this independent campus independent learning program to run, support from all parties is needed, especially university leaders, who open up opportunities and encourage students and lecturers to be able to carry out this program so that the quality of university graduates can compete internationally.(Asmadi, Romansyah, et al., 2022)

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

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As is known, the era of digitalization and globalization is an era of competition for the quality of a product. A quality product will be in demand by consumers, conversely if the product is not of good quality it will be abandoned by consumers. Likewise, universities in the era of globalization must be based on quality (Asmadi et al., 2023). Higher education institutions are required to be able to design and implement innovative learning processes so that students can achieve learning outcomes including aspects of attitudes, knowledge and skills optimally and always relevant. In order for this independent campus independent learning program to run, support from all parties is needed, especially university leaders, who open up opportunities and encourage students and lecturers to be able to carry out this program so that the quality of university graduates can compete internationally.

## **METHOD**

### **Design and Samples**

Research on the Role of the Independent Campus Learning Program in Increasing Village Independence uses a qualitative descriptive method with a library study approach using literature in the form of journals, books and scientific articles as the main object. Literature study according to Zeid in(Supriyadi, 2017)is a series of activities related to methods of collecting library data, reading and taking notes and processing research materials. The qualitative method was chosen because

qualitative research can be accounted for in its validity and its validity and reliability can be trusted.

### **Instrument and Procedure**

Research data is obtained by searching for reference sources from books or e-books, then journals via Google Scholar/Google Scholar or through the help of journal search applications such as Harzing PoP. The journals selected are journals published in the last 10 years so that the sources are relevant to current situation. After that, the journal is then analyzed, summarized and classified, giving rise to new concepts related to the discussion. The role of MBKM in improving the quality of college graduates.

### **Data Analysis**

Data validity uses data triangulation.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

The quality of college graduates is a form of student learning success in completing their study program who have high intelligence and soft skills with the ability to master skills in their field. The quality of graduates comes from quality educational institutions and the quality of educational institutions is supported by personnel such as administrators, educators and educational staff who are qualified and professional.

According to Minister of Education and Culture Regulation Number 49 of 2014 concerning National Higher Education Standards, specifically Article 4 paragraph (l), the implementation of higher education must meet the National Education Standards, which consist of: "(a) graduate competency standards; (b) learning content standards; (c) learning process standards; (d) learning assessment standards; (e) standards for lecturers and education staff; (f) standards of learning facilities and infrastructure; (g) learning management standards; and (h) learning financing standards." In terms of type, higher education is divided into two, namely: state universities (PTN) and private universities (PTS). PTN is a higher education institution whose management and regulations are carried out by the State, while PTS is a higher education institution whose management and regulations are carried out by the private sector. in the Minister of National Education's Strategic Plan (2010-2014) that "Higher education programs are carried out to support the goal of providing and affording high quality, relevant, internationally competitive and equitable higher education services in all provinces." Therefore, a quality higher education institution consists of resources that provide quality services and support from various factors such as facilities and other support that make it possible to produce quality graduates who make alumni ready to face future challenges.

The Independent Campus Program is expected to provide freedom for students to achieve their dreams. It is time for students to gain independence in learning. Various Merdeka Campus programs are designed to prepare superior human resources for a developed Indonesia. Through the Merdeka Belajar Campus Merdeka, students are ready to make Indonesia developed. What is needed to achieve all targets and dreams must be based on literacy, competence and quality character. Universities also have an important role in preparing superior and progressive graduates. Strengthening the Independent Campus ecosystem is needed so that students are able to achieve their dreams. Leadership, policy, funding, career development, partnership networks, teaching & research factory, entrepreneurship and business incubation,

### **Legal Basis for MBKM**

The legal basis for implementing the Three Semester Study Right policy program outside the Study Program includes the following:

1. Law Number 20 of 2003, concerning the National Education System.
2. Law Number 12 of 2012, concerning Higher Education.
3. Law Number 6 of 2014, concerning Villages.
4. Government Regulation Number 04 of 2014, concerning the Implementation of Higher Education and Management of Higher Education Institutions.
5. Presidential Regulation number 8 of 2012, concerning KKNI.
6. Regulation of the Minister of Villages, Development of Disadvantaged Regions and Transmigration Number 11 of 2019, concerning Priority Use of Village Funds in 2020.
7. Regulation of the Minister of Villages, Development of Disadvantaged Regions and Transmigration Number 16 of 2019, concerning Village Deliberations.
8. Regulation of the Minister of Villages, Development of Disadvantaged Regions and Transmigration Number 17 of 2019, concerning General Guidelines for Development and Empowerment of Village Communities.
9. Regulation of the Minister of Villages, Development of Disadvantaged Regions and Transmigration Number 18 of 2019, concerning General Guidelines for Assistance to Village Communities.

### **The role of MBKM in improving the quality of graduates**

At this time, it is known as the industrial revolution 4.0, where technological developments are very rapid. Like the previous revolutionary period which was able to increase progress in various fields in various parts of the world. However, the increasing development of this technology is causing great concern, because there are jobs that are being replaced because of the sophistication of this technology. Independent campus Independent Campus learning gives students the opportunity to gain experience and freedom to study outside their major. This is a step to improve the quality of education initiated by the Minister of Education Nadiem Karim(High & Culture, 2020). Education always strives to create students who always make updates for the sake of updates at all times. Not only able to be highly

educated but also able to be an agent of change in small and large scopes. The units that have the most influence in change are universities. Because this is where maturity comes in pursuing education and is expected to become an agent of change in thinking and acting. That is why universities are expected to be able to make innovations in every learning process. Namely human-centered learning to support the achievement of quality graduates who are ready to face constantly changing situations as well as rapid technological developments. (Siregar et al., 2020).

The government also plays a role in changing education, and this is where the government created the concept of independent learning campuses. Where this concept is to provide freedom for three semesters to carry out actions that require learning and social experiences, without neglecting technology and these three semesters are carried out outside the study program. This is done to be able to produce the best graduates from tertiary institutions who will become the biggest agents of change and can improve the abilities of graduates, Goals and Outputs of the Independent Campus Learning Program for Students

There are 8 forms of Merdeka learning activities at the Merdeka Campus in accordance with Minister of Education and Culture Regulation No. 3 of 2020 Article 15 Paragraph 1 which can be carried out in study programs and outside study programs, including:

1. Internship or Industrial Practice Program

Internship activities for 1-2 semesters will provide students with sufficient experience, and the industry will gain talent which, if suitable, can then be directly recruited, thereby reducing initial recruitment and training costs. Students who are familiar with the workplace will be better prepared to enter the world of work and be able to apply their knowledge optimally. During internship activities, students will gain hard skills in the form of skills, complex problem solving, analytical skills, and so on, as well as soft skills, such as work ethics, communication, cooperation, and many more.

2. Projects in the Village

It is a social activity/project to help communities in rural or remote areas in developing the people's economy, infrastructure, and others. This activity can be carried out together with village officials (village heads), BUMDes, cooperatives, or other village organizations. This activity can give students direct learning experience by living among people who live in rural areas. Students can also identify potential and handle various problems that occur in the village directly with the community.

3. Student exchange

Take classes or semesters at foreign or domestic universities, based on cooperation agreements that have been entered into by the Government. Grades and credits taken at foreign universities will be equalized by each university. Provide opportunities for learning experiences by improving soft skills and hard skills at other universities.

4. Research or Research

Academic research activities, both science and social humanities, are carried out under the supervision of lecturers or researchers. Can be done for research institutions such as LIPI/BRIN, LAPAN, NASA, universities, and so on. Must be supervised by a lecturer or instructor appointed by the campus.

5. Businessman

Students develop entrepreneurial activities independently as evidenced by explanations or proposals for entrepreneurial activities and proof of consumer transactions or employee pay slips. This program could also be a solution in dealing with the problem of intellectual unemployment among undergraduates

6. Independent Study or Project

Students can develop a project based on a special social topic and can work together with other students to solve a problem in society and its surroundings. This project can be carried out in the form of group work across scientific disciplines and can also be a complement to or substitute for courses that must be taken.

7. Humanity Project

Students develop and train themselves to have social sensitivity, to explore and deepen existing problems so that they can be resolved according to their respective interests and skills. Apart from that, students are also able to uphold human values in carrying out duties based on religion, morals and ethics. This activity must be accompanied by a supervisor. Through this program, students' social sensitivity will be better trained. Not only that, critical thinking and problem solving skills will also increase.

8. Teaching at School

Teaching activities in elementary, middle and high schools for several months can be carried out by student friends. Schools can be in city locations or remote areas. This program is also very suitable for students who want to help improve the equality of education quality in Indonesia.

## CONCLUSION

Independent Learning and Independent Campus is a government concept to answer the challenges of pChanging times are so fast through Minister of Education and Culture Regulation No.3 of 2020. This policy was rolled out as an effort to prepare college graduates who able to face social, cultural, world of work changes and rapid technological advances. The MBKM program gives students the right to study for three semesters outside the study program (1 semester outside the University's internal study program and 2 semesters outside the University). Learning activities outside of higher education include Industrial Internships/Work Practices, Community Service in Villages, Teaching in Educational Units, Student Exchanges, Research/Research, Entrepreneurship, Independent Studies/Projects, and Participating in Humanitarian Programs (Directorate General of Higher Education 2020) . Universities through this program are expected to be able to produce graduates who are in line with developments in science and technology, the needs of the business and industrial world, as well as the ability to build society in accordance with the continuously developing world order. Students are not only the



best graduates who are good at theory. However, he is able to enter the field with the knowledge gained at university to make relevant breakthroughs. Students are also able to change according to demands because there are several types of jobs that have disappeared. It is also hoped that students will be able to create new jobs that did not previously exist. Therefore, based on the rules above, the author draws the conclusion that the concept of independent learning in an independent campus means that students are really prepared to be truly ready to face big challenges in the real environment (be it the work environment or the community environment). With an independent campus, students can be given a broader learning experience by implementing strategies, learning methods that are more challenging and centered on students, in this case students. For example, through discussions, problem-based learning strategies which get students used to being responsive to whatever happens in the environment

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