

IMPLEMENTATION OF MERDEKA BELAJAR – KAMPUS MERDEKA IN INDONESIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

The Kampus Mengajar (Teaching Campus) program is part of the Merdeka Belajar–Kampus Merdeka (Freedom of Learning) policy initiated by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia as an effort to transform learning in Indonesian higher education. This program aims to provide contextual learning experiences to students through direct involvement in strengthening literacy, numeracy, technology adaptation, and educational administration in primary and secondary education units. This study aims to analyze the implementation of the Kampus Mengajar (Teaching Campus) program in Indonesian higher education, identifying achievements, challenges, and its implications for student competency development. The study used a qualitative descriptive method with a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach. Data were collected through searches of national and international indexed scientific articles, proceedings, and official policy reports relevant to the period 2020–2025. The analysis process was carried out through the stages of identification, selection, quality evaluation, data extraction, and synthesis of findings. The results of the study indicate that the implementation of Kampus Mengajar has a positive impact on improving students' pedagogical, social, leadership, and digital literacy competencies. In addition, this program contributes to strengthening the profile of adaptive and collaborative graduates. However, several obstacles were identified, including institutional readiness, coordination between universities and partner schools, and administrative and technical challenges in the field. This study concludes that Kampus Mengajar (Teaching Campus) is a relevant policy innovation in promoting experiential learning in higher education, but requires strengthening the governance system and ongoing evaluation to improve its implementation effectiveness.

Keywords: Kampus Mengajar, Independent Learning–Independent Campus, implementation of education policy, SLR, Indonesian higher education.

INTRODUCTION

The transformation of higher education in Indonesia in recent years is marked by the birth of the Merdeka Belajar – Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) policy, initiated by the

Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia. This policy was designed in response to the challenges of the Industrial Revolution 4.0 and the Society 5.0 era, which demand that university graduates possess adaptive, collaborative, and creative competencies, as well as the ability to solve real-world problems in society. MBKM emphasizes learning flexibility through the right to study three semesters outside of study programs, including through the Teaching Campus program, internships, independent study, research, and humanitarian projects.

Regulatory-wise, this policy is reinforced through Minister of Education and Culture Regulation No. 3 of 2020 concerning National Higher Education Standards, which provides opportunities for students to gain off-campus learning experiences as part of fulfilling graduate learning outcomes. This concept aligns with the experiential learning approach, which emphasizes direct, experience-based learning as a means of strengthening competencies (Prihatin et al., 2025). Thus, MBKM is oriented not only toward knowledge transfer but also toward contextual and relevant learning transformation to the needs of the workplace and society.

One concrete implementation of MBKM is the Teaching Campus Program. This program provides students with the opportunity to be directly involved in the learning process at school, particularly in strengthening literacy, numeracy, technology adaptation, and school administration. Conceptually, this program represents a collaboration between universities and educational institutions to support improving the quality of primary and secondary education while also providing a platform for authentic learning for students.

Several studies have shown that the implementation of the Teaching Campus program contributes to improving students' pedagogical competence, communication skills, leadership skills, and digital literacy (Nugroho, 2024). Furthermore, this program is considered capable of increasing students' social sensitivity to educational issues in 3T (frontier, outermost, and disadvantaged) regions. However, several studies have also revealed implementation challenges, such as inter-institutional coordination, the readiness of field supervisors, curriculum alignment, and aspects of program administration and reporting (Junanah, 2021).

On the other hand, the dynamics of the Campus Teaching program's implementation from generation to generation demonstrate variations in the program's selection, training, monitoring, and evaluation mechanisms. This variation necessitates a comprehensive study of the program's implementation nationally, particularly within the context of higher education institutions in Indonesia. A *Systematic Literature Review (SLR)* is crucial for systematically and objectively synthesizing various previous

research findings, thus providing a comprehensive picture of achievements, challenges, and recommendations for policy strengthening.

Based on this description, this study aims to analyze the implementation of the Kampus Mengajar Program as part of the MBKM policy in Indonesian higher education through a qualitative descriptive approach based on SLR. This research is expected to provide theoretical contributions to the development of experiential learning models in higher education, while also providing practical recommendations for strengthening the governance of the Kampus Mengajar program in a sustainable manner.

The Independent Learning–Independent Campus (MBKM) policy is a transformation strategy for higher education in Indonesia that grants universities and students greater autonomy in designing learning experiences. This policy aims to increase the relevance of graduates to the needs of the workforce, industry, and society. The implementation of MBKM is reinforced through Minister of Education and Culture Regulation No. 3 of 2020 concerning National Higher Education Standards, which affirms students' right to pursue learning outside their study program for three semesters.

Conceptually, MBKM is rooted in a progressive educational paradigm that positions students as active subjects in learning (*student-centered learning*). This principle aligns with constructivism theory, which states that knowledge is constructed through experience and social interaction (Dewi & Fauziati, 2021). In this context, MBKM not only reforms the curriculum structure but also shifts the learning orientation from mere content mastery to holistic competency development.

According to the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia, MBKM is designed to produce graduates with 21st-century competencies, namely critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication. These competencies align with the global 21st-Century Skills framework (Saiin et al., 2024).

The Teaching Campus Program is a form of MBKM implementation that provides students with the opportunity to be directly involved in the learning process in primary and secondary schools. This program focuses on strengthening literacy, numeracy, technology adaptation, and school administration.

Theoretically, Campus Teaching can be understood through the experiential learning perspective developed by David A. Kolb (1984). In this theory, learning occurs through a cycle of concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. Students involved in Campus Teaching directly experience

the dynamics of learning in schools, reflect on those experiences, and then develop new understandings and skills (Safitri, 2025) .

Furthermore, this program is also relevant to Albert Bandura's (1977) social learning theory, which emphasizes the importance of observation and social interaction in the learning process. Students learn through interactions with teachers, other students, and the school community, resulting in the transfer of knowledge and the formation of social character (Wahyu, 2026) .

Empirical research shows that Kampus Mengajar (Teaching Campus) has a positive impact on improving students' pedagogical competence, leadership skills, and digital literacy (Oktiningrum, 2025) . However, the effectiveness of program implementation is influenced by institutional readiness, the quality of provision, and a continuous monitoring system. Furthermore, qualitative descriptive research using data analysis by Miles and Huberman indicates that the Kampus Mengajar program benefits students, teachers, lecturers, and schools, particularly in improving students' literacy and numeracy AKM scores compared to the previous year (Virzha, 2025).

From a policy implementation theory perspective, the success of a program is determined not only by policy design but also by implementing actors, resources, communication, and the policy environment. Edwards III's (1980) policy implementation model emphasizes four main variables: communication, resources, disposition (attitude of implementers), and bureaucratic structure. These four variables are relevant to analyzing the implementation of the Teaching Campus program in various Indonesian universities (Dewi, 2025) .

Furthermore, both top-down and bottom-up approaches to policy implementation can be used to understand the dynamics of program implementation. Top-down, the Teaching Campus program is a national policy designed by the government. However, at the implementation level, its success depends heavily on the initiative and creativity of universities and partner schools as implementers on the ground.

Strengthening student competencies through the Teaching Campus aligns with the Outcome-Based Education (OBE) concept, which emphasizes the achievement of graduate learning outcomes (Rodin et al., 2024) . Through hands-on experience in school, students develop pedagogical, professional, social, and personal competencies in an integrated manner.

Furthermore, experiential learning is also related to the development of soft skills such as leadership, social empathy, interpersonal communication, and adaptability (Putri et al., 2025) . In the context of Indonesian higher education, strengthening these

competencies is crucial for increasing graduate competitiveness at the national and global levels.

The Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method is used to systematically and transparently identify, evaluate, and synthesize research findings (Qudratuddarsi et al., 2024) . SLR allows researchers to obtain a comprehensive overview of trends, patterns, and research gaps related to the implementation of the Teaching Campus.

This approach generally follows the stages of formulating research questions, determining inclusion and exclusion criteria, searching databases, selecting articles, extracting data, and synthesizing results. With SLR, analysis of the implementation of the Teaching Campus can be conducted in a more objective and evidence-based manner (*evidence-based review*).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach with the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method to examine the implementation of the Teaching Campus Program as part of the Independent Learning–Independent Campus policy in Indonesian higher education institutions. SLR was chosen because it allows researchers to systematically and evidence-basedly identify, evaluate, and synthesize research findings. The literature search process was conducted through national and international databases such as Google Scholar and Garuda Indonesia for the period 2020–2025 with keywords related to "Teaching Campus," "MBKM," and "higher education policy implementation." The selected articles are empirical research relevant to the context of Indonesian higher education institutions.

The research stages included formulating research questions, establishing inclusion and exclusion criteria, selecting articles through title, abstract, and full-text review, and evaluating methodological quality. The data obtained were then analyzed using thematic analysis techniques to identify patterns, achievements, and challenges in program implementation. The study procedures adhered to the SLR guidelines and the PRISMA model (Anggraeni, 2024) to ensure transparency, consistency, and validity of the literature synthesis results.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on a literature selection process using the SLR approach, a number of empirical articles were obtained discussing the implementation of the Kampus Mengajar Program as part of the Merdeka Belajar–Kampus Merdeka policy in Indonesian universities. The synthesis revealed three main findings.

First, in terms of strengthening student competencies, the majority of studies report improvements in pedagogical competence, communication skills, leadership, classroom management, and digital literacy. Students gain authentic experience in designing lessons, conducting simple assessments, and adapting to partner school conditions. This aligns with the principle of experiential learning, which emphasizes learning through direct experience (Akbar, 2025) .

Second, in terms of its contribution to partner schools, the Kampus Mengajar program has proven to help strengthen student literacy and numeracy, assist with technology adaptation, and provide administrative support. The presence of students provides an additional resource that supports the learning process, particularly in schools with limited teaching staff.

Third, in terms of implementation challenges, several obstacles were identified, such as academic schedule inconsistencies, variations in the quality of student training, coordination between universities and schools, and inconsistent monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. These challenges indicate that policy implementation still requires strengthening governance and standardization of implementation at the institutional level.



Image: SLR Research Results

Research findings indicate that the Campus Teaching Program represents an effective experiential learning model for enhancing student competency. Theoretically, these results reinforce the experiential learning theory. (Susilo & Mustikawati, 2025) , which emphasizes that concrete experience and systematic reflection are the foundation for

developing professional competence. Students not only understand pedagogical concepts theoretically but also internalize them through direct practice in the field.

From a policy implementation perspective, program success is influenced by communication, resources, and bureaucratic structure. Implementation at various universities demonstrates that program effectiveness is highly dependent on institutional readiness and collaboration with partner schools. Therefore, although the policy is designed nationally by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia, successful implementation remains determined by the capacity of implementers at the local level.

Furthermore, findings regarding the improvement of students' soft skills align with the concept of Outcome-Based Education (Manggali et al., 2024) , which emphasizes measurable learning outcomes. Kampus Mengajar not only strengthens pedagogical hard skills but also develops students' adaptive character, social empathy, and collaborative abilities. However, to ensure the program's sustainability, a more integrated evaluation system and strengthened academic supervision are needed so that learning outcomes can be measured more objectively and sustainably.

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