

The Implementation of Independent Learning-Independent Campus (MBKM) Teaching Assistance in Education Units Towards Students' Soft Skills and Hard Skills

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Abstract

The objective of this research was to find out whether the implementation of Independent Learning-Independent Campus (MBKM) teaching assistance in education units has an impact on students' soft skills and hard skills. This research took place at the State University of Makassar, Faculty of Language and Literature. The participants of this research were the students of the English Education Study Program. The researchers used a descriptive qualitative method with a purposive sampling technique to select the participants. The instrument of this research was an interview. Based on the result of the interview, the researchers found that the implementation of MBKM can improve student's soft skills and hard skills. Furthermore, the researchers concluded that the implementation of independent learning-independent campus (MBKM) teaching assistance in education units can improve students' soft skills and hard skills.

Keywords: *MBKM, Teaching Assistance, Soft Skills, Hard Skills.*

1. Introduction

The Independent Learning Campus Independent Program (MBKM) is a program that accommodates a university to prepare students to become graduates who are capable in the fields of science and technology, have character, and can meet the challenges of the world of work (Nugroho & Puspitasari, 2021). This program is a breakthrough from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology in creating and improving quality human resources in terms of hard and soft skills as well as forming characters who can compete with other competitors. Therefore, it is hoped that this program will be able to stimulate students or lecturers to have different

experiences so that they can broaden their horizons, networks, and character excellence (Rodiyah & Rodiyah, 2021).

Merdeka Campus is a new idea that builds on the "Merdeka Belajar" concept. This idea is anticipated to give students the freedom to pursue higher education as an option. A learning innovation that can lead to high-quality learning and the development of people with character is the Merdeka Campus concept (Sopiansyah, Masruroh, Zaqiah, & Erihandiana, 2022). In the framework of the current curriculum development in Indonesia, MBKM is one of the most significant educational goals at the higher education level (Rahmattullah & Syamsu, 2021). The

relevance and execution of the MBKM program in the context of higher-level educational contexts have drawn the attention of various academics as a result.

The MBKM program is an implementation of a collaborative learning approach. MBKM provides eight types of activities, namely teaching assistance, research assistantship, internship, exchange students, humanitarian projects, thematic KKN, and independent research and entrepreneurship. The goal of MBKM, as stated in the MBKM handbook (Dikti, 2020), is to enhance graduates' competency in both soft and hard skills so that they will be more prepared and pertinent to current demands and will be better equipped to serve as future leaders of the country with outstanding character. These skills are necessary for students to deal with a variety of changes as the globe is expanding more quickly. This is in line with the National Educational Association's recommendation that educational institutions prepare students from elementary school through college.

Following the statement above, the research question is formulated as follows:

- a. How is the implementation of the MBKM Teaching Assistance program towards student's soft skills?
- b. How is the implementation of the MBKM Teaching Assistance program towards student's hard skills?

2. Literature Review

2. 1. Definition of Independent Learning-Independent Campus (MBKM)

The Independent Learning-Independent Campus (MBKM) policy is one of the initiatives of the Minister of Education and Culture (Makarim, 2020). The right to study for three semesters outside of the study program is one of the programs included in the Independent Learning Policy-Independent Campus. This curriculum is required by many laws and legal foundations for higher education to enhance learning and graduate quality. A flexible and independent higher

education learning program called Independent Learning-Independent Campus (MBKM) was developed to address the demands of students by fostering an open-ended, creative learning community.

2. 2. Teaching Assistance

Teaching Assistant in Education Unit is a program that is implemented for students who have taken a minimum of 80 credits. This program trains prospective teachers to teach and do whatever the teacher does in the classroom. This program aims to build the character of prospective teachers so that they are ready to be a teacher. Abbasian, Mahmoudi, & Rashtchi, (2019) argue that the program focuses on the ability of the candidate teachers to teach in the classroom and do school administration. This means that prospective teachers do not just learn how to manage a class and convey the material, but also how to do school administration. This is in line with (Jones, Fraser, & Randall, 2018), which emphasize that teaching training is an activity to integrate the theory that is obtained from the class with practice.

2. 3. Soft Skills

According to Dikti (2020), soft skills are aptitudes that are strongly tied to a person's personality and afterward demonstrate how that person can engage with the surrounding environment. Because it focuses on how a person interacts with other people, it can also be referred to as interpersonal skills, which are necessary in the workplace. Soft skills, such as cooperation, communication, time management, and leadership ability, are more universal, making them necessary for any position. According to Yuliani (2012), soft skills are a type of behavioral competence. As a result, they are referred to as interpersonal skills and comprise communication abilities, negotiation and conflict resolution skills, personal effectiveness, innovative problem-solving, and more.

2. 4. Hard Skills

A person's capacity for work is more likely to be impacted by their hard skills. Hard skills are extremely specialized. This ability can be learned, assessed, and tested, and is typically relevant to the job for which the applicant is applying. This is a circumstance in which someone can compare their hard talents to those of others since they are assessed based on ability. This skill may be learned, so it can also be cultivated through formal education, courses, professional development, and certification. One way to gauge a person's level of hard-skill proficiency is by looking at the material on their diploma. Because a degree or certification can demonstrate whether someone has mastered difficult abilities. Example of hard skills is reading, writing, mathematics, foreign language skill, analytical skills and the ability to use a computer (Dikti, 2020).

3. Research Methodology

3. 1. Research Design and Variables

This study adopts a descriptive qualitative approach. Descriptive research, often known as survey research, establishes and explains how things are, according to Gay, Airasian, & Mills (2006). This means that the researchers will describe the subject of the investigation as it is, without falsification or reduction, and the researcher's involvement. The data in this study is solely from the MBKM participants, and it also reflects what they encounter while teaching in the field. Additionally, Gay, Airasian, and Mills (2006) admit that quantitative research cannot capture all of the thoughts, perceptions, opinions, or beliefs of the person being examined. In this case, this investigation is intended to find out whether the implementation of Independent Learning-Independent Campus (MBKM) teaching assistance in education units has an impact on students' soft skills and hard skills. Equations should ideally be written using the same word processor as the rest of the text, without the use of handwritten symbols to improve legibility.

Equations must be right justified and numbered consecutively with their numbers in parenthesis.

This research consists of two variables, they are independent variable and dependent variable.

- a. The independent variable is MBKM Teaching Assistance.
- b. The dependent variable is the soft and hard skills of the students.

3. 2. Research Participants

The research participants are selected via purposive sampling with criteria as follows:

- a. Participated in MBKM (Recent 2022 batch),
- b. Gender selection based on their volunteer (2 males and 2 females),
- c. English Education study program,
- d. Actively recognize participation in the program.

3. 3. Research Instruments

This study uses both online and in-person interviews to collect all relevant data for the research issue. Interviews were used as the primary research instrument. A series of questions are included in the interview that are used to collect information in line with the goals of the study. Semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions are the sort of interviews that are used to get the data. It means that to gather data, the researchers will pose questions or make a statement that the respondent must answer. The researchers will then craft new questions in light of the respondent's responses.

3. 4. Procedure of Collecting Data

This is the step taken for data collection as follows:

- a. The researchers introduced herself and informed their intention.
- b. The researchers requested the respondents to participate in the research.
- c. The researchers requested the respondents to be interviewed.

- d. They may withdraw at any time without pressure.
- e. They are informed that their participation is off the record, it is only used for education purposes.

3. 5. Technique of Collecting Data

In this study, the researchers will qualitatively analyze the data. The researchers employ descriptive qualitative methods to analyze the data. The methodical collection of data is known as a data analysis approach, which helps researchers reach conclusions. The right data analysis method will make concluding simple. Analysis, according to Miles & Huberman (1994, p. 10), entails three simultaneous activities: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/ verification.

4. Findings

The interview question was given to four students who joined the MBKM Teaching Assistance program. After obtaining the result, the researchers concluded and found that there was an improvement in student's soft skills and hard skills. The findings of this research presented the result of the interview based on the research question: (1) How is the implementation of the MBKM Teaching Assistance program towards student's soft skills? (2) How is the implementation of the MBKM Teaching Assistance program towards student's hard skills?

4. 1. The implementation of the MBKM Teaching Assistance program toward student's soft skills

a. Communication Skill

During the MBKM Teaching Assistance program, students can communicate with new people including teachers, school principals, students, and even fellow group members from different universities.

Based on the interview, participant 1 said:
"Actually, I think my communication skill is quite good before I join the program, but after joining the MBKM program my

communication skill got better than before because I have to communicate with students, teacher/headmaster, and my team members and the style of communication between each of them is different so I need to adjust by which whom I talk to" (AAS 5/9/2022 No.2).

In participant 1 opinion, it can be seen that his communication skills have improved after participating in the MBKM Teaching Assistance program. This was also stated by participants 2, 3, and 4.

Based on the interview, participant 2 said:

"My communication skills before I joined the MBKM program. I think it's not that bad because I usually communicate with the people around me, such as communicating with my friends and my lecturer. So, I think my communication skills before I joined the MBKM program are not bad" (NG 5/9/2022 No.2).

"My communication skills after I joined the MBKM program are improved because I met many people, such as my friends from other universities, the teachers from the school, and the local community at the placement site, and I usually communicate with them every day, so my communication skills are improved" (NG 5/9/2022 No.3).

The third participant also has an improvement in her communication skills. She even says that out of all her soft skills, the one that she thinks has the most improvement is her communication skills because she uses them every day, which makes her good at them. Based on the interview, participant 3 said:
"Before I joined the MBKM program, my communication skills were not very good because I was very shy and always felt nervous when someone asked me to speak in front of people. But after I joined the MBKM program, I learned how to communicate better with others because during the program we learn how to communicate with the teacher and also how to teach the students and how to respond to them if they are having difficulty in the learning process" (EYN 10/9/2022 No.3).

Out of those skills, I think the one that improves the most is my communication skills, because when teaching I communicate more with students and learn how to give material to the students because each student has a different character and way of understanding the material, so that's where my communication skills are needed so that the students can be more interested and enjoy the learning process (EYN 10/9/2022 No.7).

The fourth participant, like the third, felt that her communication skills had improved the most out of all soft skills. Based on the interview, participant 4 said:

"Before joining the MBKM program, my communication skills were still lacking and sometimes I don't have the confidence to speak in public" (IAI 10/9/2022 No.2).

"After joining the MBKM program, I feel my communication skills are increasing because during this program I always do a presentation in front of all the teachers in my school" (IAI 10/9/2022 No.3).

"From all the skills before, I think the one that has improved the most is my communication" (IAI 10/9/2022 No.7).

b. Time Management Skill

During the MBKM Teaching Assistance program, students must be good at managing time because school starts earlier than university and that is where students' time management skills are tested.

Based on the interview, participant 1 said:

"About my time management skill before joining the MBKM program I think it's not that good because I often can't manage my time correctly which result me sometimes became late, but after join the MBKM program I think my time management skill got a lot better than before because the school started in 7:30 am and the location of the school is quite far from where I live so I learn to manage my time well so that I can arrive at the school on time" (AAS 5/9/2022 No.4).

"Out of all that soft skills I think the one that I feel has more improvement is definitely my time management skill" (AAS 5/9/2022 No.6).

The first participant thinks that his time management skills have improved significantly more than any other skill because he can feel that he has become better at it. The first participant thought that his time management was bad before he joined the MBKM, but through the program, he learned to manage his time and became better at it. And the 2nd participant also said the same thing.

Based on the interview, participant 2 said:

"My time management is actually not very good because I frequently struggled with time management" (NG 5/9/2022 No.5).

"Out of all the soft skills, I think my time management is the one that has improved the most because before I joined the MBKM program, it was really hard for me to manage my time. But after I joined this program, I learned to manage my time. Because when I joined this program, I had to follow the subject on the campus and also teach in the classroom, and it's actually really hard for me to do two things at once, but I manage to do so and that's why I think my time management has improved the most" (NG 5/9/2022 No.6).

Like the other participant, the third participant also has improved in her time management skills. She was not good at it before, but by joining the program she can improve that. Based on the interview, participant 3 said:

"Because elementary students finish school at 11 a.m., I can use the time after that to attend the class on campus, and that is how I learn how to use my time more effectively" (EYN 10/9/2022 No.5).

c. Problem Solving Skill

During the MBKM Teaching Assistance program, the students certainly found some problems, and the students needed to solve their problems. Of course, that's where the students' problem-solving skills were trained. Based on the interview, the third participant is

the only one who feels an improvement in her problem-solving skills. She said:

"Before I joined the MBKM program, I didn't really know how to solve a problem by myself, but after I joined the MBKM program, me and my friends have good teamwork and we take time to discuss the problems that we have so we can solve them together, and that's when my problem-solving skills improved." (EYN 10/9/2022 No.9).

4. 2. The implementation of the MBKM Teaching Assistance program toward student's hard skills

a. Computer Skill

During the MBKM Teaching Assistance program, the participants helped fill in students' grades, learned to program several applications, and gained new knowledge about computers from their teammates.

Based on the interview, participant 1 said:

"I think I have an improvement in my computer skill after joining the MBKM program because one of my friends which has a better computer skill than me had taught me so much about computer such as I learn to install a software and also learn to managing the data in Microsoft word and Microsoft excel and get to know some tools in Microsoft word that I have never known before" (AAS 5/9/2022 No.7).

"Between those hard skills I think the one who has more improvement is my computer skill. But out of all the soft and hard skills before, the one that have more improvement is my soft skills especially the time management skill" (AAS 5/9/2022 No.9).

Based on the 1st participant's opinion, his computer skills have improved after joining the MBKM Teaching Assistance program because his friend had taught him computer skills, and the 2nd and 3rd participants also said the same thing. Among the hard skills, the one that the first participant feels the difference in is the computer skill. But among all the soft and hard skills, the one that he thinks has the most improvement is his soft skills, especially time management skills.

Based on the interview, participant 2 said:

"I think my computer skills before joining the MBKM program are quite good because I have learned about computers since I was in junior high school and I'm actually quite good at them" (NG 5/9/2022 No.7).

"After I joined the MBKM program, I think it's improved because we have so much data that we need to input to the operator computer of the school, such as the grade of the students, and we have to use some formula to calculate the score of the students" (NG 5/9/2022 No.8).

The second participant said that his computer skills have improved because he learned something new, like uploading the students' grades, which is something he didn't know and had never done before.

Like the 1st participant, the 3rd participant also improved her computer skills by learning from her friend who is good at it. She said:

"Before I joined the MBKM program, my computer skills were not bad, but after I joined the MBKM program, there was a new thing that my friend taught me during the program, that is how to use the editing app on my laptop, because at that time we needed to make a certificate for the students after we joined the pesantren kilat activity, so that's when I learned it." (EYN 10/9/2022 No.8).

b. English Skill

During the MBKM Teaching Assistance program, some students added English lessons in school subjects with the approval of the school because the students had never studied English before.

Based on the interview, participant 2 said:

"Before I join the MBKM Teaching Assistance program, my English is already good but after I join this program it is quite improved because I decided to make an English corner in the school that I teach and before I give the student's the material, I learned it first and try to find a fun way to learn English for my students and that makes me learn a new thing also recall my past English material".

"I think between the computer and English skills, the one that's improve more is my computer skill because I get the opportunity to do something that I haven't done before like uploading the student's grade" (NG 5/9/2022 No.11).

"I don't think I can choose between soft skills or hard skills which are more improved because I think they are equal and I really feel my changes in both skills" (NG 5/9/2022 No.12).

The second participant said that his English skills improved during the MBKM program, and the second participant also thought that his soft and hard skills were equally improved.

Based on the interview, the 3rd participant said: *"Before the MBKM program actually my English is already pretty good, but after the MBKM program it is improved because I learned a new thing during teaching English in the school, at first that school doesn't have an English subject but the headmaster asks me to teach English a little bit for the students".*

"Between computer and English skill, I think the one that improved more is my computer skill because every program kerja that we are doing there always a problem we face so we do our best to solve every problem together" (EYN 10/9/2022 No.10).

"Out of all the soft and hard skill I think it's my soft skill that improved more because soft skills are more often implemented specifically because every day soft skills are more needed especially communication skill because we need to teach the students every day while the hard skill, I rarely used it" (EYN 10/9/2022 No.11).

The third participant thinks that out of all the soft and hard skills, the one that she feels the most improvement in is her soft skills, especially her communication skills because she uses them every day.

The fourth participant is already good at her hard skills, and she didn't feel any improvement in them after joining the program. *"I think my computer skills before joining the program are good because when I wanted to operate or work in Microsoft Office, I didn't find any difficulty using it and I think it's still the same after I joined the MBKM program" (IAI 10/9/2022 No.8).*

"I think my problem-solving skills are also good because I always discuss them with other people when I encounter some problem" (IAI 10/9/2022 No.9).

5. Discussions

This part will present a further explanation of the previous research findings, namely the results of: (1) How is the implementation of the MBKM Teaching Assistance program towards students' soft skills? (2) How is the implementation of the MBKM Teaching Assistance program towards students' hard skills?

5. 1. The impact of the implementation of the MBKM Teaching Assistance program on student's soft skills

Based on the findings above, there are some impacts of the implementation of the MBKM Teaching Assistance program on student's soft skills. There are:

a. Improve student's communication skill
According to (Wahab, 2009), communication theory affects learning theory. It can be proven that good teaching requires good communication as well. Communication theory is an important consideration in selecting teaching strategies. Teachers must be able to convey messages to different students. Various combinations of media are used, such as oral, written, drama, and others. The message conveyed is complicated because it includes not only facts but also attitudes, ideas, and other issues. Not to mention, if it is associated with the development of increasingly sophisticated and fast

telecommunication media, it causes teachers to feel left behind by their students towards new data and information.

b. Improve student's time management skills
One of the most crucial abilities can help you plan your work so that you can accomplish your goals. Effective time management gives you the freedom to be innovative and proactive in pursuing your objectives. You can set aside time to consider a vision for yourself and your business when you have free time after finishing your tasks. The goal of effective time management, according to Adebisi (2013), is to attain the desired lifestyle balance. Working efficiently on the job requires producing high-quality work, not just a lot of it. According to research by Claessens, Eerde, and Rutte (2007), employing time management strategies will directly affect performance and satisfaction as well as lower anxiety and stress levels.

c. Improve student's problem skill
(Anderson, 2005) said, "problem solving is goal-directed behavior that often involves setting sub-goals to enable the application of operators." This means that problem solving is a goal-directed behavior that often involves the state of a goal to enable the people who use it. So, by using a good goal, a person will be more aware of the situation and conditions when they are solving the problem. By having problem-solving skills, you can identify the problem, find out why it doesn't work as expected, and determine actions (solutions) to fix it so you can control your life for the better. Problem solving ability also allows you to be able to take advantage of a problem as an opportunity in life.

5. 2. The impact of the implementation of the MBKM Teaching Assistance program on student's hard skills

a. Improve student's computer skill
The ability that you must have to enter the world of work is computer technology. With the times, computer technology has become one of the abilities that every employee must have to be able to complete their duties properly. However, some positions in the

world of work require someone with a deeper understanding of computer technology itself. (Johnson & Marakas, 2000) categorize students' computer skills as "general computer skills" or "specific computer skills." These two types are constructed for different computer tasks. In general, computer use skills are defined as judgments of individual skills in using various computer applications. Specific computer skills are the students' ability to perform specific computer-related tasks in the general computing domain.

b. Improve student's English skill
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe was a German author. He claimed that people who do not understand foreign languages are no different from those who do not understand their native tongue. According to Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, every person in the world speaks a different language. We need to be able to speak at least one foreign language because, although there are many different languages in the world, all people live on the same planet. To be able to speak with anyone in this hemisphere, we must acquire foreign languages like English, which is a foreign language that has been designated as an international language.

6. Conclusions

Based on the findings and discussion of the previous chapter, the researchers conclude that:

- a. The implementation of the MBKM Teaching Assistance program has a positive influence on students, especially on their soft skills. All students interviewed stated that they felt an improvement in their soft skills, especially in their communication and time management skills, because of the intensity of the activities carried out during the program so that they were able to communicate better and manage time more effectively.
- b. The implementation of the MBKM Teaching Assistance program also has a positive influence on students' hard skills. 3 out of 4 interviewees stated that they experienced an increase in their hard skills, especially computer skills and English

skills, because during the program they found new things when helping with school administration and learned new things from their group mates who were good at computers. They also teach the students English so that there is an improvement in their hard skills.

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