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Author Name(s): Khairul Bariyyah, Laily Tiarani Soejanto, Leny Latifah, Eva Kartika Wulan Sari, Ifdil, Ifdil,

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Enhancing educational quality during MBKM implementation



Khairul Bariyyah¹, Laily Tiarani Soejanto², Leny Latifah², Eva Kartika Wulan Sari², Ifdil Ifdil^{3*)}

- ¹Universitas Negeri Malang, Indonesia
- ²Universitas PGRI Kanjuruhan Malang, Indonesia
- ³Universitas Negeri Padang, Indonesia

ABSTRACT

This study aimed to evaluate the educational quality of Merdeka Belajar-Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) curriculum, alongside the competency of students and the satisfaction level of the framework partners. An exploratory and descriptive approach was employed, involving students and partners associated with MBKM during the semester 2021/2022 academic session. A descriptive quantitative approach was also used, involving a total of 199 respondents selected through complete sampling. This group comprised 189 students, with 3 university associates, and 8 non-university partners. Data collection was carried out using a questionnaire provided by the Indonesian Ministry of Education, Culture, Analysis, and Technology, and subjected to simple regression analysis. The results showed that MBKM implementation met the quality standards encompassing education, array, community engagement, and additional criteria as specified in SN-DIKTI. This indicated a positive connection between the competency of students and the satisfaction of MBKM partners. Therefore, this study observed that MBKM implementation successfully achieved the education quality criteria for graduate competency.

Keywords:

Merdeka belajar, *Kampus merdeka*, Educational quality

Corresponding Author:

Ifdil Ifdil,

Universitas Negeri Padang Email: ifdil@konselor.org

Introduction

Comprehensive guidance is essential for equipping students with the skills to adeptly navigate the ever-changing landscape of social, cultural, global, and technological diversity (Siregar et al., 2020). Ensuring students are thoroughly prepared to adeptly handle the rapidly evolving demands in their chosen fields and workplaces remains a top priority (Poernomo, 2020). In an attempt to address this problem, Merdeka Belajar-Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) curriculum was developed, geared toward optimizing students learning outcomes (Sopiansyah et al., 2022). MBKM learning process includes the elements of attitudes, knowledge, and skills that are correctly developed and always relevant (Kodrat, 2021). The curriculum provides university students with the flexibility to learn both within and beyond the campus setting (Mariati, 2021). Among the programs at Universitas PGRI Kanjuruhan Malang (Unikama) benefiting from MBKM funding, the guidance and counselling initiative stands out from all. MBKM-supported programs, such as student exchanges, humanitarian projects, internships, analysis ventures, and thematic community service, provide students with the opportunity to shape their learning methodologies. This fosters a culture of structured and self-directed learning, resulting in the acquisition of valuable knowledge and expertise. To ensure continuous enhancement in quality, the implementation of the curriculum requires thorough monitoring and evaluation. This assessment ensures the alignment of the framework with the established benchmarks in education, array, community service, and additional standards integral to the reference of MBKM program.

Education standards encompass various aspects, with the learning process playing a crucial role in ensuring continuous improvement and strategic quality control (Usarov, 2019). In this situation, the guidance and counselling department of Unikama not only oversees the learning process but also ensures alignment with the established quality benchmarks (Zyromski et al., 2018). The quality of this learning process is evident through its adherence to these standards, guiding every stage from the planning to implementation and monitoring-evaluation process (Lambie et al., 2018).

To ensure a robust evaluation, the guidance and counselling department employs a formal mechanism for periodic assessment of both students and lecturers during on-campus learning phases, encompassing the preparation, implementation, and evaluation stages (Betters-Bubon et al., 2021). Despite the ongoing development of the mechanism for off-campus learning activities, an assessment approach is required to facilitate monitoring and evaluation (Kalkan & Nesime, 2019).

The monitoring and evaluation of MBKM curriculum not only contributes to data collection but also serves as an integral component, with a focus on enhancing the quality of the framework (Baharuddin, 2021). The activity plays a crucial role in ensuring the quality of the curriculum implementation, involving the development of standardized instruments to gauge the competency of students (Nurhayati et al., 2021). The effort of quality assurance is aligned with specific Key Performance Indicators (KPI), such as KPI 2, which emphasizes students completing at least 20 course credits off-campus. KPI 6 also fosters increased partnerships to facilitate the 6 instructional activities, and KPI 7 concentrates on classroom learning approaches involving case methods and team-based projects (Pecori et al., 2019).

In relation to KPI 2, the guidance and counselling department focus on involving 20% of its total students in off-campus activities, accumulating a minimum of 20 academic credits. This target is set to equip prospective counsellors with the ability to navigate cultural diversity (Soto et al., 2018). cultivate counselling skills alongside multicultural awareness, and enhance their capabilities to effectively interact with individuals from diverse traditions (Hutton et al., 2019). For KPI 6, the department endeavors to establish a partnership for each learning activity in 2021. Regarding KPI 7, the goal is to incorporate the case method and team-based projects into 50% of the courses during the odd semester of the 2021 academic year. This approach focuses on to be problem-based and collaborative learning that extends beyond the classroom to encompass practical field experience.

Monitoring and evaluation hold crucial functions (Suksatan et al., 2018), specifically in ensuring the ongoing activities remain aligned with the program goal (Mayanja, 2020). Monitoring takes place as an ongoing evaluation during activities, facilitating necessary adjustments (Ortiz Martínez et al., 2018). Evaluation occurs at the end of the program to determine the degree of the goal attainment (Kopnina, 2020) and also serves as feedback for future project planning (Karagöz, 2021). Therefore, this study aims to assess the quality of education in the Guidance and Counseling program during MBKM implementation. The results are intended to serve as a foundation for improving future MBKM adaptation and elevating the instructional standard of the program.

Methods

A methodological approach characterized by its exploratory and descriptive quantitative nature was employed (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Respondents consisted of students and partners affiliated with MBKM implementation during the odd semester of the 2021/2022 academic year. A total of 199 respondents, comprising 189 students, 8 non-academic, and 3 university partners, were selected through the total sampling technique. Data were collected using a questionnaire developed by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Analysis, and Technology of Indonesia. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics and correlation tests to ascertain the distribution and achievement of MBKM implementation quality in the Guidance and Counseling department at Unikama. For evaluating the quality achievement, the data were compared against the Key Performance Indicator (KPI) standards of the department. The KPI criteria included the following: (1) The achievement of



students participating in extracurricular activities beyond the university, (2) The partnership achievement of the department, and (3) The in-class learning success.

The learning activities within MBKM program provided university students with a blend of challenges and opportunities. This blend focused on developing their innovativeness, creativity, capacity, and autonomy in seeking knowledge through engagement with field dynamics, real-life problems, social interaction, collaboration, self-management, performance demands, targets, and achievements (Sopiansyah et al., 2022). A properly designed and executed MBKM program was expected to contribute to the comprehensive development of the hard and soft skills of the students (Schieber, 2020). MBKM framework was anticipated to address the requirements of producing graduates capable of keeping pace with technological advancements, business and industrial needs, and evolving community dynamics.

The essence of the MBKM curriculum lay in offering students the opportunity to engage in comprehensive learning over three semesters, extending beyond their departments. This extends to options within the same university, external institutions, social organizations, or research establishments (Supriyadi, 2021). To achieve KPIs 1 and 2, which were central to the goals of the guidance and counselling department, MBKM program embraced the involvement of various stakeholders. Table 1 showed the active engagement of students and partners in MBKM implementation.

_	Students					Non-		
	Guidance and Counseling	Early Childhood Education	Food Technology	English Education	Management	University research partner	University partner	
Male	37	4		1		6	1	
Female	105	36	1		1	9	3	
Total	142	40	1	1	1	15	4	

Table 1. The Involvement of Students and Partners in MBKM Implementation

The Competency Attainment of Students

The competency standard of students encompassed the enhancement of attitudes, knowledge, soft skills, and hard skills in MBKM activities. As shown in Figure 1, the assessment outcomes of competency criteria exhibited satisfactory results, indicating progress in attitude, including morals and ethics, knowledge, covering field expertise, communication skills, technology utilization, teamwork, and self-development. The descriptive analysis showed that the implementation of MBKM framework during the odd semester of the 2021/2022 academic year had the potential to elevate the competency of students to meet institutional standards.

Achievement of Students Participating in Off-Campus Activities

The KPI achievement criterion stated that students were required to actively participate in the MBKM program to attain 20 credits, as shown in Figure 1. The data from Figure 2 showed 73.1% of students comprehended the policies established by both the department and the university. Additionally, 76.9% understood the possibility of participating in MBKM activities off-campus for a maximum of three semesters, and 81.1% of the students recognized the potential of the program to earn them 20 credits. The result indicated the successful realization of the targeted KPI in the guidance and counselling department of Unikama.

Department Partnership Attainment

Concerning the attainment of the partnership-related KPI, the standard was achieved when the department formed collaborations with both university and non-academic partners. Figure 3 provided evidence that each MBKM initiative had affiliations with at least one institutional partner. This observation confirmed the successful fulfillment of the partnership-related KPI by the department.



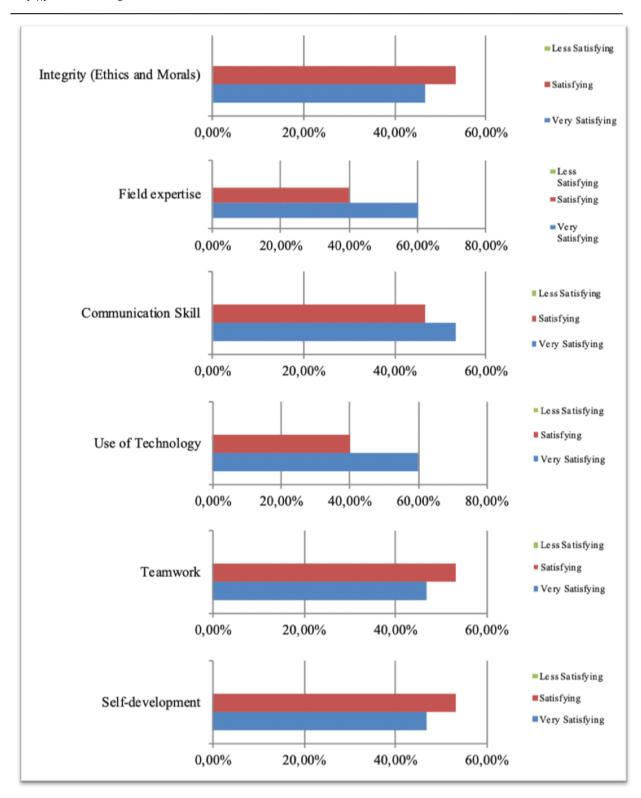


Figure 1. The Competency Assessment of Students



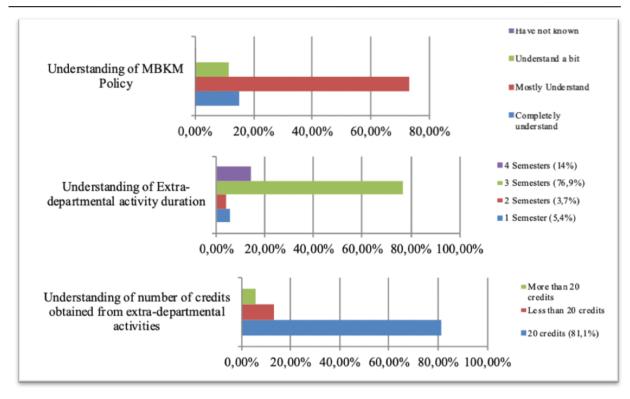


Figure 2. Students understanding and participation in MBKM program

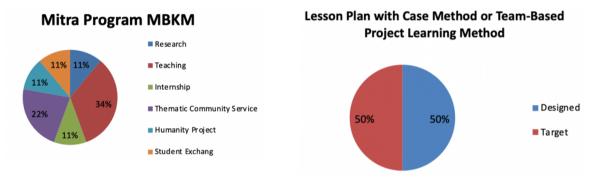


Figure 3. MBKM Program Partners Distribution

Figure 4. Achievement of the Case method and Team-based Project Learning Method

Classroom Learning Achievement

KPI 7 focused on the implementation of case methods and team-based project learning methodologies. The guidance and counselling department targeted to execute these methods in 21% of the total courses which was 13 out of 61. As shown in Figure 4, 13 subjects during the odd semester of the 2021/2022 academic year were designed using the case method and team-based project learning techniques, signifying the compliance of the department with the predetermined minimum standard.

The Competency Improvement of Students and the Satisfaction of Partners

Table 2. Inferential Analysis Prerequisite Tests

	Data Normality Kolmogorov-Smir	Linearity Test Deviation from Linearity			
Variable	Statistic	Sig	F	df	sig.
Competency*Satisfaction	.22	.06	2.67	2	.10



The prerequisite analysis indicated that the information concerning the competency of students and the satisfaction of partners exhibited a normal distribution (z=0.22, p>0.05), with no deviation from linearity (F=2.67, p>0.05) (Mishra et al., 2019), indicating the suitability of the data for performing correlation and simple linear regression tests.

Table 3. Correlation between the Competency of Students and the Satisfaction of Partners

	Depression	Anxiety
The Competency of Students	-	
The Satisfaction of Partners	.99**	-
** (p<.001)		

The correlation test result as shown in Table 2, indicated a positive connection between the competency of students and the satisfaction of partners. The statistical outcome strongly suggested that this relationship was both robust and significant (r=0.99, p<0.01) (Abu-Bader, 2021). In Table 3, the regression analysis showed that the competency of students significantly contributed to the satisfaction of partners by 98% (R2=0,98, F=702,01, P<0,01) (Kumari & Yadav, 2018).

Table 4. Regression Test for the Competency of Students and Satisfaction of Partners

Variable	Simultaneous Summary Model			Partial Summary Model		
	R	R2	F	β	t	
The Competency of Students ** (p<.001)	.99	.98	702.01**	1.3	26.5**	

The proficiency of students in counsellor competence was characterized by three criteria, namely awareness, knowledge, and skill. These aspects were vital for a prospective counsellor to become an adaptive, flexible, and autonomous professional, capable of delivering counselling services aligned with the goals of MBKM program. The development of skills such as critical, creative, innovative thinking, and problem-solving were fostered through MBKM initiative (Mariati, 2021). These competencies were nurtured through the 6 learning activities integral to MBKM implementation, including student exchange, teaching assistance, internship, thematic community service, humanity, and analysis projects (Kamalia & Andriansyah, 2021).

MBKM curriculum provided students with flexible learning opportunities, allowing them to participate both within and outside the university environment (Afriansyah, 2021). The curriculum empowered students to shape their educational journey (Netcoh, 2017), fostering an autonomous learning culture that enriched the experience and knowledge (Sengupta & Blessinger, 2020). Aligned with MBKM curriculum, the 6 learning activities offered by the department focused on equipping aspiring counsellors with the necessary competencies. These skills involved adapting to cultural diversity, acquiring multicultural knowledge, and effectively communicating and collaborating with individuals from diverse traditional backgrounds. To execute the MBKM policy, the students collaborated with the partners of the guidance and counselling department.

To enhance the entire proficiency of students, both practical and interpersonal capabilities were embraced through an innovative and creative learning strategy, by integrating the team-based project and case method (Numonjonov, 2020). These approaches facilitated the preparation of students for their future careers by merging theoretical learning with hands-on practical experience (Deep et al., 2019). During the implementation of the team-based project (Miller et al., 2021) and case method (Fu & Menzies, 2017), the department received valuable support from instructional experts and enhanced the development of instructional materials.

Students from other faculty also seized the opportunity to learn within the guidance and counselling department. The curriculum in the university enabled students to enroll in courses outside their department in line with MBKM policy. The regulation of Unikama required each



department to provide a course package of approximately 15 credits to other departments within the university and engage in students exchange initiatives with external institutions. This directive sparked keen interest among students from various departments, prompting them to enroll in classes offered by the department.

Another crucial factor that reinforced MBKM implementation within the guidance and counselling department was the dedication of the university to nurturing a culture of excellence. This commitment was realized through the development of an internal assurance system, effectively maintaining the quality of MBKM activities. The quality standards of MBKM program were evident through the specific departmental requirements, which encompassed various aspects. These requirements were (1) curriculum development, (2) ensuring competency equivalence among graduates with varying study loads, (3) aligning courses with extracurricular learning activities, (4) providing additional guidance to lecturers, (5) assisting department partners, (6) cultivating collaborations with educational institutions or third parties, and (7) facilitating the availability of extra-departmental learning facilities.

The quality assurance unit of the guidance and counselling department had a structured mechanism for periodically evaluating and monitoring students and lecturers throughout the preparation, implementation, and evaluation stages. This process focused on students, lecturers, and academic advisors and the result exhibited their achievement during the program. Furthermore, the results were instrumental in assessing the performance of students in MBKM framework. The potential of the program to enhance the competency of students was highlighted in recommendations for practitioners and future analysis. The monitoring and evaluation of MBKM which focused on enhancing the multicultural competence of the counsellors were performed through internal evaluations, involving two sessions, namely during the implementation and completion of the framework.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the results indicated that MBKM implementation had fulfilled the quality attainment indicator as stated in SN-DIKTI, encompassing education, analysis, community engagement, and additional criteria relevant to the application of the framework. The correlation analysis showed a positive relationship between the competency of students and the satisfaction of partners within the curriculum. Therefore, this study conclusively established that MBKM implementation indeed fulfilled the benchmark for educational quality.

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