



Benefits of the MBKM Student Exchange Program in Improving the Quality of Islamic Education in UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta

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Abstract

Globalization creates both positive opportunities and significant challenges, particularly for a growing number of people in the productive age. These individuals must adapt not only to innovation but also to compete for jobs as technological advances rapidly and systematically replace human labor. Consequently, adapting to these developments is essential for both individuals and organizations to remain relevant and competitive in the evolving global landscape. In response, the government, through the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Ministry of Education, Culture, and Higher Education, has established a student exchange program called Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM). There are eight types of programs launched, one of which is the MBKM student exchange program for students to study abroad. This research will analyze the power of knowledge emphasized by Michel Foucault in exploring the benefit of MBKM. Practically, the program aims to prepare talented young people to be globally competitive, literate in technological developments, and learn about various cultures worldwide. This program has a rigorous and transparent selection process for applicants to participate in the MBKM student exchange program to select students who can truly represent Indonesia with a good understanding and sense of responsibility. Qualitative research methods were used in this study. From this method, it was found the MBKM student exchange

program was successfully implemented at UIN Jakarta, indicating Islamic education quality is excellent and globally recognized, as evidenced by the successful participation of 34 students in this program. This program demonstrates the government's commitment to educate young people to realize a golden Indonesia.

Keywords: Islamic Teacher Education, Reflective Practice, Pedagogical Competence, Professional Identity, Teaching Practicum

Globalisasi menuntut semua pihak untuk mengikuti perubahan zaman ke arah yang positif, namun penuh tantangan akibat meningkatnya jumlah anak muda dengan usia produktif yang membutuhkan pekerjaan dan harus bersaing pula dengan kemajuan teknologi yang pesat dan terstruktur yang dapat menggantikan tenaga manusia. Untuk itu sangat perlu beradaptasi dengan semua perubahan yang terjadi agar tidak terlindas oleh zaman. Dalam menghadapi hal tersebut pemerintah melalui Kementerian Agama dan Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Pendidikan Tinggi mengadakan pertukaran pelajar atau disebut dengan istilah Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM). Ada delapan macam program yang dicanangkan pemerintah, salah satunya adalah MBKM pertukaran pelajar bagi mahasiswa ke kampus luar negeri. Tujuan adanya program ini untuk menyiapkan tunas bangsa yang bertalenta agar memiliki daya saing global, melek terhadap perkembangan teknologi dan belajar berbagai budaya dari seluruh negara. Program ini memiliki seleksi yang ketat dan transparan dalam seleksi penerimaannya agar dapat mengikuti program MBKM pertukaran pelajar ke luar negeri, demi terjaringnya mahasiswa yang benar benar bisa memperkenalkan Indonesia dengan pemahaman yang bagus serta bertanggung jawab. Metode penelitian kualitatif digunakan dalam penelitian ini. Dari metode tersebut ditemukan bahwa, program MBKM pertukaran pelajar berhasil berjalan di lingkungan UIN Jakarta mengindikasikan bahwa mutu pendidikan Islam sangat baik dan diakui secara global seiring dengan berhasilnya 34 mahasiswa mengikuti program ini. Adanya program ini, terlihat pula kesungguhan pemerintah untuk mencerdaskan anak bangsa demi mewujudkan Indonesia emas.

Kata kunci: Guru Pendidikan Islam, Praktik Reflektif, Kompetensi Pedagogis, Identitas Profesional, Praktikum Mengajar

INTRODUCTION

MBKM consists of eight programs: student exchange, internships or work placements, teaching assistance, research, humanitarian projects, entrepreneurial activities, independent studies or projects, and village development or thematic fieldwork. Students can participate in these activities for up to three semesters. The MBKM program was created in response to changing eras and technological transformation, which has resulted in human jobs being taken over by robots or artificial intelligence, thereby reducing the number of job vacancies. The job vacancies are being replaced by either being identified as requiring minimal skills or easily replaced by technology, such as administrative staff, factory workers, accountants, data entry clerks, and other repetitive jobs. In Indonesia, young people are generally still employed in repetitive jobs and are not involved in jobs that require high skills. This is because the skills youth possess are considered insufficient for such positions. Their presence in these positions is often feared to slow down work, damage team performance, and even reduce company performance, while global changes are happening so fast that it is as if they are racing against time. In response to this phenomenon, the government sees the need for early training so youths can compete domestically and globally. This led to the creation of the Merdeka Belajar-

Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) program, a student exchange program abroad (Meke et al., 2021) The regulations on MBKM are stipulated in Permendikbud Number 3 of 2020 concerning National Standards for Higher Education, Article 18 stipulates undergraduate or applied undergraduate students can fulfill the specified study period and load. Among other things, first, they must participate in the entire learning process in the study program in accordance with the study period and load. Second, they must participate in the learning process within the study program to fulfill part of the study period and load. Third, participating in the learning process outside the study program to fulfill the remaining study period and workload.

MBKM is within the scope of all universities under the Ministry of Education, Culture, Higher Education (Kemendikbud Dikti) and the Ministry of Religious Affairs (Kemenag). In general, Kemendikbud Dikti regulations require all universities to participate in the MBKM program regardless of their background, without distinguishing between public or private universities, whether under the auspices of Kemendikbud Dikti or Kemenag. Universities on an international, national, or even local scale are allowed to participate. Specifically, the State Islamic University (UIN) Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta implements MBKM in accordance with the directives of Kemendikbud Dikti, Kemenag, and the Rector's decision, then down to the faculty level, and most specifically to each study program. (Marjan Fuadi, 2022) In supporting the MBKM student exchange program, UIN Jakarta encourages all faculties to increase student motivation and hone their soft skills through academic guidance from lecturers, enabling students to enhance their academic experience by studying abroad. UIN Jakarta, in welcoming and implementing this program, also provides simple administrative access and a special guidebook so that students understand the MBKM student exchange selection process, are able to determine their overseas destination campus, and understand what to do while studying abroad. (Muhtadi, 2023)

Student exchanges are prepare young Indonesian talent to position themselves in the digital age, equip them with above-average skills, and enable them to observe how international students learn to cope with this rapidly changing world. When these students return home, they can share and put into practice what they have seen and experienced abroad. (Setiawan et al., 2023) The MBKM Campus program is spread worldwide, in Europe, the USA, the Middle East, Asia, Latin America, and Africa. This program enables students to create and establish global connections. The learning experiences and connections they gain will automatically influence the renewal of Islamic education quality at the university and shape the students' mindset, allowing them to transfer their knowledge to other students, thereby indirectly influencing the quality of Islamic education at the university level. (Syaifuddin & Annur, 2025) The MBKM student exchange program is most suitable for implementation at UIN Jakarta, especially since UIN Jakarta has many faculties, including those specializing in formal sciences, applied sciences, social sciences, humanities, natural sciences, and religious studies. Anggraini's research (Anggraini et al., 2022) states there is a significant influence between students who participate in student exchanges and those who do not, particularly in terms of religious tolerance. Anggraini's paper focuses on the positive impact of domestic student exchanges, while this study will focus on the positive impact of overseas student exchanges. Findings from a study written by Eccia (Eccia et al., 2022) found that MBKM student exchanges are the most popular activity among students. Students choose to participate in this program because they believe their soft skills will improve after completing this activity. Students also believe soft skills acquired during this activity will

increase their chances of seeking job after graduating. Unlike the aforementioned article, this study will discuss in depth the success of MBKM student exchange at UIN Jakarta as a barometer of religious moderation and the transfer of knowledge between countries in Europe and the United States to Indonesia. The latest paper by Mulyanto (Mulyanto et al., n.d.) found that students with good academic grades will be able to adapt to the MBKM student exchange system both psychologically and socioculturally, but other obstacles such as homesickness, confusion, and anxiety in a new environment were also found. That research focuses on the obstacles encountered by students when participating in MBKM student exchange programs, while this research will focus on the success of students in obtaining MOSMA scholarships and the benefits for the university environment after they have completed the program. To that end, this study will attempt to examine the continuity between the success of the MBKM student exchange program and the improvement of students' global awareness, the impact on critical thinking skills, cultural adaptation, and tolerance among religious groups, as well as the strengthening of academic and Islamic research competencies through international experience.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In find scientific, valid findings and strengthen the argument regarding the success of MBKM student exchange programs, this study uses qualitative research methods. Data was collected and obtained from books on Islamic education and general education, journal articles, official government websites, and national online news outlets that discuss educational development. Furthermore, the data obtained will be developed to discuss the importance of MBKM student exchange and its future benefits for students, universities, and the government, as well as an understanding of regulations as a reference for students to participate, and its role in improving the quality of Islamic education. This study uses a secondary method to collect data. Secondary data is obtained from existing books, journals, and websites. The data collection technique was a literature study conducted objectively and scientifically. From this process, a comprehensive conclusion was reached, presenting new facts and information that the MBKM student exchange is significant to continue because it motivates students to become on par with other countries that are considered far better than Indonesia and can be a reference for improving the quality of university education under the Ministry of Religious Affairs (Jaya, 2020).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Success of UIN Jakarta Students in Participating in the MBKM Student Exchange Program – MOSMA

The MBKM student exchange program aims to make students excel in their study fields by integrating Islam, local values, and science nationally and internationally. To support this objective, knowledge sharing is necessary. UIN Jakarta students utilize knowledge sources outside UIN Jakarta, including study abroad, to improve skills, facilitate links and matches in facing globalization, and provide a platform to develop their potential in line with their passion and talents. Students are enthusiastic about participating in the MBKM student exchange selection during their undergraduate studies, mainly since the benefits include gaining networks abroad, making highly qualified and intellectually gifted friends, and learning about foreign cultures. In 2023, 34 UIN Jakarta students successfully obtained MOSMA scholarships from 124 students who passed the national selection from various religious universities, meaning that a quarter of the students who will go abroad are UIN Jakarta students. The breakdown is as

follows: 21 students will study in the United States (US), nine students will go to Tunisia and Morocco, two students will go to Malaysia, and one student will go to the United Kingdom. Of the 34 students who departed to study abroad, nine were from the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences (FISIP) at UIN Jakarta, and all went to the US from different universities. Students from FISIP and Dirasat Islamiyah received the most scholarships from other faculties, each sending nine students. (UIN Jakarta, 2023). MOSMA is very important for UIN Jakarta, referring to Michael Foucault's statement, knowledge can generate power, but the power that emerges must be in favor of human values. In this context, human values are Islamic values which are in line with Pancasila. For example, in Islam there are values of tolerance (Tasamuh) and moderation (Tawasuth), and students must possess when studying abroad.

Benefits of the MBKM Success at FISIP UIN Jakarta

The MBKM Student Exchange abroad is to provide students with the experience of studying abroad to gain broader knowledge and compete at the global level, as well as to raise Indonesia's prestige in the era of technology. With the experience gained by these students, FISIP UIN Jakarta can produce graduates who are ready to face the increasingly complex and global challenges of life. This also indicates that the quality of Islamic education in FISIP is very competent, as evidenced by the fact that it was able to send nine students to the US after a very rigorous selection process. The ability and enthusiasm of FISIP students to study abroad are in line with data from the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, which shows that Indonesia ranks second in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) as a country sending students to study abroad, with a total of 59,224 people. This data shows desire of students to obtain better knowledge abroad is highly aspired by every student, especially since this desire and aspiration can build Indonesia towards a golden age through student exchange programs, which are considered one of the ways to globalize Indonesia, with students as the main agents (Marietha, 2024).

MBKM Student Exchange Program for Universities under the Ministry of Education and Culture - IISMA

One of the programs offered by the Directorate of Learning and Student Affairs (Belmawa) is the Indonesian International Student Mobility Awards (IISMA), also known as the Indonesian Student International Mobility Scholarship. This program provides opportunities for undergraduate students from all universities in the country to study at leading universities around the world, with the aim of enabling students to expand their knowledge and skills in workplace, in accordance with their interests and aspirations. (Global Unair, 2024) Students participating in the IISMA program and the Ministry of Education and Culture's MBKM program in seven other areas, including internships/work placements, teaching assistantships, research, humanitarian projects, entrepreneurship, independent projects, or real-world lectures, are not allowed to participate in more than one program at a time, in order to avoid double funding and to share opportunities with other students. Students who receive Bidik Misi scholarships may participate in the IISMA program at foreign universities, but with the stipulation that their Bidik Misi scholarships will be temporarily suspended for their participation in the IISMA program. (Kemendikbud, 2021)

The general requirements for IISMA are students who can participate in IISMA must be enrolled in a state university under the supervision of the Ministry of Education

and Culture and private universities (PTS) in the LLDIKTI region from the fourth to seventh semesters. Students must also have good English language skills and a recommendation from their university. During their studies abroad, up to 20 SKS will be recognized by the PT through the provisions of Ministerial Decree No. 74/P/2021. The activities undertaken by students at the foreign university during one semester must not exceed 20 SKS. (Shabrina, 2023) Since IISMA was launched in 2021, 2,551 students have registered. In 2022, the number of registrants tripled, along with adding student quotas, with 7,522 students registering for undergraduate programs and 3,506 students registering for vocational programs. In 2023, student enthusiasm skyrocketed to 7,714 registrants for undergraduate and vocational programs. In 2024, applicants increased dramatically to 15,211, with 12,268 students in the undergraduate or S-1 program and 2,943 students in the vocational program. This high applicant increase shows the program is needed, and it provides undergraduate and vocational students with excellent educational opportunities (Firman, 2024).

The University of Indonesia (UI) has the highest number of IISMA scholarship recipients. A total of 353 participants received IISMA scholarships in 2024. 261 students are from undergraduate or S-1 programs, while the other 92 recipients are vocational program students (D3 and D4). In 2023, UI also had the highest number of IISMA scholarship recipients. (Sherly, 2024) In 2022, the university with the most IISMA scholarship recipients was Gadjah Mada University (UGM). In 2022, were 1,155 students sent from 106 public and private universities. Students who received IISMA scholarships could study directly at 72 universities with excellent global reputations and prestige. These institutions are spread across 26 countries. A total of 409 students from 64 vocational programs were sent to 46 of the world's top universities in 11 countries. In 2021, 970 students from 98 institutions successfully received IISMA scholarships, entitling them to study at 59 leading universities worldwide spread across 28 countries (Noe, 2022).

The MBKM Student Exchange Program for Universities under the Ministry of Religious Affairs

The Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Education Fund Management Institution (LPDP) have collaborated in developing and implementing the Kurikulum Merdeka through the MoRA Overseas Student Mobility Award (MOSMA) scholarship program. This scholarship is specifically intended for students currently enrolled in religious higher education institutions (PTK) throughout Indonesia. Unlike universities under the Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemdikbud Dikti), which have IISMA, MOSMA offers students the opportunity to study at foreign universities through physical mobility. Students can participate in the MOSMA program for one semester, or up to six months, and earn credits that can be converted into Semester Credit Units (SKS) at their home universities. (Abdul Manap, 2023) Through this program, students are expected have opportunity to study at the best universities abroad. In the future, it is hoped to help students broaden knowledge in their chosen fields, learn to adapt to the culture of socializing and studying at international universities, promote and introduce Indonesia's potential. This program also encourages students to continue their education to a higher level through scholarships or independently, to demonstrate the fighting spirit of Indonesian youth globally (Kemenag, 2023).

Standard Objectives the MBKM Student Exchange

Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture Number 3 of 2020 states that student exchanges aim to shape the character of students who respect cultural diversity, views, religions, beliefs, and unique opinions or findings of others in society and the environment, as well as to work together and have social empathy and concern for society and the environment. Some objectives include: First, studying outside the campus (domestically and abroad) and living with families at the destination campus will increase students' understanding of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (unity in diversity) and strengthen cross-ethnic and cross-cultural brotherhood. Second, enhancing the spirit of national unity and integrity through friendship among students of different ethnicities, cultures, religions, and regions. Third, conducting knowledge transfer to address differences in higher education between domestic and international institutions. Article 18 also states that undergraduate or applied undergraduate students can fulfill their study period and load in the following ways: First, by participating in the entire learning process at the university in accordance with the study period and load; or Second, by participating in the learning process within the study program to fulfill part of the study period and load, and the rest by participating in learning outside the study program. (Kemdikbud, 2023)

Improving the Quality of Islamic Education through the MBKM Student Exchange Program

Student exchange programs enable students to study abroad at one of their home university's associate institutions. These programs are very popular with students, especially as they experience new cultures, make new friends, and enjoy new environments, all of which help shape their personalities. Studying at a different university will certainly hone their language skills, especially for UIN Jakarta students who, in general, are fluent in Arabic as well as English, which gives UIN Jakarta a distinctive character compared to other campuses under the Ministry of Education and Culture. Islamic education instills moral values based on the Quran and Hadith. The meaning contained therein includes character education that upholds ethics, morals, and Islamic values, which will later be able to answer various problems in society. Islamic education also has no limits in the pursuit of knowledge, nor does it have limits in spreading knowledge. Islam teaches knowledge broadly, so it is not surprising many famous Islamic figures of the past are highly respected today for their knowledge that can be applied in various fields such as technology, physics, astronomy, philosophy, and medicine. (Rahman & Nelson, 2025)

Islam teaches goodness to all of humanity, without distinguishing between race, ethnicity, culture, location, or even a person's beliefs. Islam also highly values education. In Islam, there is no difference between men and women in their right to obtain knowledge, and there is no prohibition on seeking knowledge in any country or region, as long as that knowledge is used for the good of humanity and not for harm. The Islamic education system emphasizes two aspects, namely theory and practice. Both are well integrated to produce high moral knowledge and civilization, from this Islamic education system emerged famous scientists from various regions, such as Ibn Sina, who was nicknamed the father of modern medicine, Ibn Battuta, a geographer, Al-Battani, an astronomer and mathematician who discovered trigonometry, and other leading scientists who were born thanks to Islam's support for the development of knowledge through guaranteed quality education. These scientists left behind extraordinary knowledge that modern humans can still benefit from today. The knowledge they discovered is applied without geographical boundaries and transcends space and time. From this, it is clear that

Islamic teaching methods are excellent. As the quality of education continues to improve, MBKM at UIN Jakarta aims to produce renowned scientists like these figures again.

With the support of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, students were sent to study abroad to learn about science and culture in their host countries for six months in various parts of the world. Studying abroad is very important, especially since the destination countries have a good reputation for education. It is undoubtedly very beneficial in developing personal skills and personality, making students more competent in the world of work. Students' success in participating in student exchanges at partner universities abroad indicates that they have understood cultural, racial, and religious diversity and can keep up with technological developments amid globalization. In a global context, students have come to understand tolerance and the importance of maintaining religious harmony and open-mindedness in accepting differences. These experiences will be applied in the university environment to improve the quality of Islamic education (Wijaya, 2024).

CONCLUSION

Education is important in this era, where the minimum degree for the young people is currently a bachelor's degree. Generally, a bachelor's degree enables people to find decent jobs and lift them from ignorance and poverty to a better future. With the abundance of scholarships today, creative students are expected to seek information about the requirements for obtaining scholarships. Similarly, there is now an MBKM student exchange program for all Indonesian students, allowing them to gain better knowledge by sending them to study abroad. For this reason, the MBKM Student Exchange Program is the answer to the demands of the times. By participating in MBKM, students are expected to be able to adapt in uncertain and rapidly changing global situation. After graduating and entering the workplace, FISIP UIN Jakarta students will become leaders and actively participate in addressing various issues, including social, economic, political, and environmental threats, as well as peace, by integrating Islamic values into their solutions. The MBKM student exchange program will be key in improving students' academic abilities for the challenging workplace. This is especially true given the highly competitive job market, which places on soft skills. UIN Jakarta, as the university sends the most students abroad through the MOSMA program, demonstrates that Islamic education and character building are also accepted globally. Students returning from studying abroad also inspire their peers to follow suit. It is essential to continue the MOSMA scholarship program, particularly in promoting Indonesia through moderation that embraces diversity and accepts all differences.

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